the weekly Standard

OCTOBER 8, 2007

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LEE BOLLINGER, TOUGH-GUY LIBERAL
HARVEY MANSFIELD

Alan Shrugged... and Washington Swooned

ANDREW FERGUSON
on the Greenspan memoirs

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In the new issue of the Hoover Digest . . .

Purple Voters in the Golden State

California's Republican Party drifted off the centrist track, but its voters didn't.

To a younger generation of political observers, California is the quintessential blue state. It's Hollywood and San Francisco, medicinal marijuana and gay marriage, self-esteem, tree-sitters—a long list of liberal symbols that raise the ire of conservative commentators. But a longer view shows that the Democratic turn in California is a relatively new, and tentative, chapter.

Until recently, Republicans were competitive in the Golden State. Moreover, Democratic registration has been stalled since 1994, whereas independents have proliferated. For most of the last half of the twentieth century, California was, if not a red state, at least reddish-purple (the legislature is another story). Why, then, are Republicans in a slump? Because they abandoned a pragmatic, broad-based identity for ideology and a narrow base. It worked elsewhere, but in California the road to electoral success favors candidates who are not just economically conservative but socially tolerant.

—Morris P. Fiorina and Samuel J. Abrams

Stalin behind Closed Doors: The Lost Kremlin Stenograms

Transcripts of crucial Soviet power struggles come to light after 70 years.

A treasure has been found in formerly top-secret Soviet archives: transcripts of discussions by the USSR's ruling body as it struggled over the young country's future. The dialogues—a thousand pages long and peppered with crude jokes, jeers, and threats—came to light only four years ago. They offer a vivid new window into the Great Terror and the Stalin-Trotsky showdown.

"You always have the last word," Trotsky charges in one clash. Stalin retorts, "You are lying because you are a pitiful coward who fears the truth." Stalin indeed gets the last word—at the end of the 15 years chronicled by the transcripts, his power is total. He can even concede that liquidating 40,000 of the communist elite might have been a mistake—but at least they were easy to replace. Hoover Institution researchers, continuing their work of collecting significant Soviet state and party documents, will publish the Politburo dialogues in November. Scholars will be poring over them for years.

—Paul R. Gregory

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The Dodd-Father

The Scrapbook enjoys a good cry as much as anyone, and we suspect there wasn't a dry eye in the *New York Times* newsroom last week when they published "Dodd's Other Campaign: Restoring Dad's Reputation" by Elisabeth Bumiller.

There was a front-page snapshot of toddler Christopher Dodd (now senator from Connecticut and Democratic candidate for president) sitting in the lap of his father, who is reading him a story in front of a fireplace. His father, of course, was the late Senator Thomas J. Dodd. Inside there's an artsy photo of today's Senator Dodd standing among some trees on the Capitol grounds (you can see the dome in the background).

The story is full of touching details. How, for example, the senator's sister stumbled on a sheaf of letters the elder Dodd, then a prosecutor at the Nuremberg war crimes trials, had written to his wife, now collected in a new book (*Letters from Nuremberg: My Father's Narrative of a Quest for Justice*) edited by Christopher Dodd. How the elder Dodd's censure by the Senate in 1967 devastated young Christopher, then a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic, whose "[presidential] campaign is the most public chapter in his career-long quest for his father's redemption." How, according to Senator Dodd's brother Thomas Jr., Christopher "said to me once, 'Every time I walk on the Senate floor, I feel that he's vindicated.'"

At which point, The Scrapbook is not ashamed to say, we reached for our handkerchief. The only problem with the story, of course, is that *Times* readers are somehow left with the impression that the noble Roman Thomas

Dodd's Other Ca
Restoring Dad's

Dodd was censured by his Senate colleagues (92-5) four decades ago not for "diverting $116,000 in campaign funds for his personal use" but because he was so gosh-darned decent and law-abiding, especially when prosecuting Nazis.

"Mr. Dodd," writes Elisabeth Bumiller, ". . . insisted that [*Letters from Nuremberg*] was not meant as a vindication, but as a reminder about the commitment to due process at the admired Nuremberg trials when civil liberties are under assault at Guantanamo—a formulation that earns him big applause on the campaign trail. . . . Friends say that Mr. Dodd has been personally overwhelmed by what he learned of his father through the letters and by his passion to redefine his legacy."

To which The Scrapbook feels constrained to add two dry-eyed comments. First, only someone like Christopher Dodd, a reliable apologist for left-wing tyrants in Latin America since arriving in the Senate, would see the lawful detention of the world's most dangerous terrorists in a compound open to public inspection as "civil liberties . . . under assault."

And second, tender letters to his wife notwithstanding, the late Tom Dodd was a crook. The "diverting [of] $116,000 in campaign funds for his personal use" was the standard sort of tip-of-the-iceberg charge meant to symbolize his long and squalid career of shaking down people for cash, in exchange for political influence, and pocketing the proceeds. If Christopher Dodd wants to learn more about his father, may we recommend *Above the Law: The Rise and Fall of Senator Thomas J. Dodd* by James Boyd (New American Library, 1968), an account of criminality written by the old senator's onetime administrative assistant which, 39 years later, still makes chilling reading. ♦

More Iraq Vignettes

We published a few observations on Iraq last week from Willy Stern, an old Scrapbook friend, who had just returned from a stint in Iraq embedded with the First Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas. Here are a couple more:

What's a Rhodes Scholar like you doing in a place like this? I went for a run the other day with the commanding general of the U.S. Army in Iraq, David H. Petraeus, and some of his senior staff. Gen. Petraeus has a Ph.D. from Princeton. His legal adviser, Col. Mark Martins also was along on the run. Col. Martins is a Rhodes Scholar with a Harvard Law degree. Petraeus's aide-de-camp ran too. He has a Duke MBA. They are all very fast. More to the point, these are also impressive human beings of superior intellect who share an unfaltering commitment to serve their

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of July 20, 1998)

country. What was John Kerry thinking?

Those naughty, rule-breaking Jews: In an effort to be sensitive to the local Muslims—only some of whom are trying to kill us—all U.S. military bases here forbid porn and alcohol. They take the ban seriously. Not so the Jews. I showed up at 1830 last night for Shabbat services in a mini-chapel over at Camp Victory. The Army had flown in a baby-faced reservist rabbi—the ever-smiling Rabbi Mark Sachs—from Pittsburgh. The nine of us in Rabbi Sachs's Baghdad "congregation" that night sat in desk chairs that we had arranged in a semi-circle around our preacher. M-16s and M-4s lined the back wall. Those in attendance included a top executive with Kellogg, Brown & Root (the contractor that performs many non-military services here), three enlisted guys, and one female (a commander in the U.S. Navy). Afterwards, someone went into the backroom and came out with a case of kosher red wine. I guess Jewish customs trump Muslim ones. Our final prayer was in celebration of the United States of America. I couldn't take notes (the rabbi was orthodox and they have some sort of prohibition about using writing instruments on the Sabbath). But there was a line in there where we all prayed for the president of the U.S. It's the first time I've ever heard a rabbi say a single nice word about President Bush. ♦

Hundreds Killed in Pearl Harbor Fighting

Our morning got off to a dismal start. We scanned the news wires and saw this Associated Press headline: "81 Killed in Afghan Fighting, Airstrikes." Sure sounded bad. Was the long-awaited "spring offensive" by the Taliban finally underway, six months later than predicted? Not exactly.

Here's how the story continued: "KABUL, Afghanistan—Heavy battles punctuated by airstrikes killed 75 suspected Taliban and at least six civilians in Afghanistan's south." Oh. So this was in fact, a military success story—for NATO and Afghan forces. They seem to have scored lopsided victories in battles against Taliban militants allied with Osama bin Laden. Too bad the headline didn't convey that.

The Scrapbook is not unreasonable. It realizes the AP is not about to allow any pro-American rooting to creep into its headlines. It's not 1944 anymore, so we're not expecting to see "Hajji Hightails It to Helmand Hills: Yanks in Hot Pursuit."

But how about "NATO Airstrikes Kill 75 Taliban"? This would seem to be a bit more informative. That it would ruin the breakfasts of those rooting for the Taliban is lagniappe. ♦

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Casual

The Truth Is Out There

Every now and then, when I pause to reflect on our ever-changing world, I wonder whatever happened to Bigfoot. Weren't we supposed to have found him by now? A television series from the late 1970s claimed that man's continual expansion into the wilderness would eventually bring us face to face with the one and only Sasquatch. It was only a matter of time.

Until recently, I had forgotten most of the details, but thanks to the wonders of YouTube, I've been watching episodes of the most riveting show ever produced, *in Search of* . . . . From 1976 to 1982, this pseudo-documentary examined the most pressing issues of the day: extraterrestrials, magic and witchcraft, myths and monsters, lost civilizations, and other strange phenomena. So maybe they weren't the most vital topics for a grownup. But for a nine-year-old, these issues were of utmost importance. Coming home from school, I would fit in 30 minutes of *in Search of* . . . before doing my homework. And long after each episode concluded, I would still be thinking about it: Did aliens really visit Peru thousands of years ago? If not, how else to explain those ancient Nazca drawings visible only from the air? When will the real Anastasia reclaim the Russian throne? How will I sleep tonight after learning about the witches of Salem?

The unsettling sound effects, the haunting music, the reenactments that never used the word "dramatization," and the deadly serious tone of the narrator, Mr. Leonard Nimoy, all made for compelling television. I was both obsessed and terrified. (I finally had enough after one segment in which a clairvoyant began scrawling the name of a dead person, calling out each letter of the name, her eyes flickering. I switched to *Tom and Jerry* until my heart rate calmed down. Then I went back.)

One particularly creepy episode examined the Amityville Horror, a string of supernatural occurrences that beset the Lutz family after they moved into a house on Long Island where a mass murder had taken place. After blessing the house, a priest was said to have suffered the stigmata. The Lutzes recounted how they attempted their own house blessing, which only made matters worse, strongly suggesting to me that these spirits did not like Catholics. (A movie of the Amityville Horror was actually filmed in my hometown of Toms River, New Jersey. Whenever my family drove past the set, I would stare at the house, thinking it was the real one. It didn't help that my older sister would yell, "Close your eyes, it's the Amityville Horror!")

DARREN GYGI

But not every episode of *in Search of*... involved the paranormal. I remember one enlightening episode that dealt with cult leader Jim Jones and the Jonestown massacre. Another show speculated on the whereabouts of the "Angel of Death," Dr. Josef Mengele (the camera crew traveled to South America and was chased off private property), not to mention John the Baptist, Jack the Ripper, and the Abominable Snowman.

Watching some of the episodes now, you can't help but laugh: "Many people do not believe in Bigfoot, but a lot of people do," says Nimoy in his introduction. "Some of them feel they must kill it to prove it exists." Meanwhile, actors are seen firing their rifles at dark, hairy beasts in the woods. Cue the opening credits, during which the catchy and keyboard-heavy theme song plays. Then this voiceover: "This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture. The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily the only ones, to the mysteries we will examine."

Which to me, at the time, basically meant: "Everything you see on this program is real."

Later shows such as *That's Incredible!*, *Ripley's Believe It or Not*, and *Unsolved Mysteries* would tap into elements of *in Search of* . . . , such as the casting of quirky hosts like Jack Palance and Robert Stack, the use of vivid dramatizations, and the tackling of strange phenomena. But none had the campy charm of the original, even if it did rely on "theory and conjecture." Watching *in Search of* . . . now, 25 years later, on a computer, it is indeed hard to take most episodes seriously—with the obvious exception of the one about Bigfoot.

My friend Pete, now a married lawyer with three kids, still remembers being gripped by the chilling words of Leonard Nimoy as he closed that segment: "If we assume Bigfoot is real and that men are closing in on this seemingly gentle monster, then we must prepare for that first meeting. To have eluded us for so long, Bigfoot must understand men very well. The burden will be on us to understand him. Bigfoot may well be waiting for some sign that we're ready."

Bigfoot is clearly waiting for *in Search of* . . . to come out on DVD.

Victorino Matus

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RAISING TAXES WON'T GENERATE THE ENERGY SHE'LL NEED

Most Americans agree energy security is a top national priority, because they want to ensure their families' quality of life now and into the future. So why do some in Congress want to raise taxes on the development of oil and natural gas resources?

History shows that changing the rules by raising energy taxes has serious consequences. After Congress levied a "windfall profits" tax in the 1980s, its own non-partisan Congressional Research Service determined this tax diverted $79 billion from domestic energy investment, reduced U.S. oil production by as much as 1.26 billion barrels and increased oil imports.

Stable tax policies encourage energy development

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates America will need 28 percent more oil and natural gas by 2030. And to make sure future generations will have it, we need stable tax policies that encourage the development of critical energy resources and continued economic growth. Benefiting Americans today – and especially tomorrow.

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America's steelmakers set an environmental standard the world's steelmakers should follow.

American steelmakers lead the way in recycling and environmental performance. We're ahead of Kyoto greenhouse emission goals by 240 percent, and we're developing innovative technologies to continue setting new benchmarks. Unfortunately, not all global steelmakers share this commitment. Lax environmental standards are one way some overseas steelmakers aren't shouldering their fair share. Protecting the Earth is a global responsibility that requires global solutions. Because there's one single place we all call home.

The New Steel Feel the Strength.

[illegible] steel.org *A message from the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI)*

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the weekly Standard

S-Veto It

You've heard the analogy. A national mandate requiring everyone to have health insurance is just like the requirement that drivers buy auto insurance. Mitt Romney, for one, cited the analogy in touting his health care plan as governor of Massachusetts several years ago. An aide to Senator Hillary Clinton did as well in describing her new health insurance initiative. So did CNN commentator Bill Schneider. He said the mandate proposed by John Edwards is "just like automobile insurance. You have to buy auto insurance. You have to buy health insurance."

The analogy is bogus, and we'll deconstruct it in a moment. But first let's identify the reason the analogy is trotted out so often. It makes compulsory health insurance sound as if the need for it is inarguable and unproblematic and no more controversial than insuring your car. The strategy behind this is hardly a secret. Advocates of a mandate are soft-pedaling what, in truth, is another lurch toward government-run health care. And they are packaging it in a way that might sound appealing to otherwise hard-headed Republicans.

Likewise, with the program known as S-chip, which Congress voted to expand last week in the face of a certain veto by President Bush. S-chip was created in 1997 with a single, stated purpose in mind: to offer federally subsidized health insurance to children ineligible for Medicaid but unable to afford private insurance. Poor children, in other words. That was S-chip's sole rationale.

Now, with the new legislation, the S-chip subsidy would cover millions of middle-class kids. S-chip proponents scoot past this aspect of the program in a heartbeat and point to the uninsured children who will be insured. Only an ogre would raise an objection.

Of course, extending a poverty program into the middle class isn't new. Nearly 30 years ago, a young congressman from Michigan named David Stockman dubbed this phenomenon the "social pork barrel" in an article he wrote for *The Public Interest*. By including some of the middle class, a program ostensibly to aid the poor could attract Republican support on Capitol Hill. And S-chip has.

The new S-chip legislation is a particularly egregious example of this. Rather than keep S-chip's cap at 200 percent of poverty ($41,300 for a family of four), the bill would raise it to 300 percent ($61,950) nationally and even higher in New Jersey ($72,285) and New York ($82,300). Sure enough, 18 Republican senators and 45 GOP members of the House voted for it.

The worst part of S-chip isn't its cost but the massive crowding-out effect it produces. Millions of kids with private health insurance would drop that coverage and sign up for S-chip instead, because it's "free." S-chip is an offer few could refuse. The Congressional Budget Office says two million children would make the switch, and that is among the more conservative estimates.

Proponents justify the crowding-out as unavoidable in an otherwise good cause. They treat as mean-spirited Bush's insistence that 95 percent of legitimately poor children—below 200 percent of poverty—be brought into S-chip before it's expanded. Senator Dick Durbin adopted the usual smarmy tone in urging Bush to sign the bill. He must do it "for the sake of the kids," Durbin said.

Now back to the auto insurance analogy. It collapses at the outset because it's not a universal mandate. No one is forced to buy auto insurance. Only those who drive are required to. Many of them don't bother or can't afford insurance and drive anyway.

Unlike health insurance, there's a national market for auto insurance. You can buy a cheap policy from an out-of-state company. You can buy only liability and not collision. If you have a history of safe driving, you get a large discount. This flexibility isn't the case with health insurance. A healthy young man in Kentucky could pay $960 for a policy that would cost $5,880 in New Jersey. The Kentucky company couldn't sell the cheaper policy in New Jersey.

Finally, there's the simple fact that most health insurance isn't insurance at all. It's not a hedge against risk, as auto insurance is. In most instances, it's merely a way for your employer, in lieu of higher salary, to pay your health bills, both minor and major.

There are problems with our health care system, but they won't be solved by creeping nationalization, sold with bogus analogies and federal payoffs to the middle class. Preserving and extending consumer choice should be the order of the day. Smart Republicans should make that their message. And President Bush should waste no time vetoing S-Chip. Do it for the sake of the taxpayers.

—Fred Barnes, for the Editors

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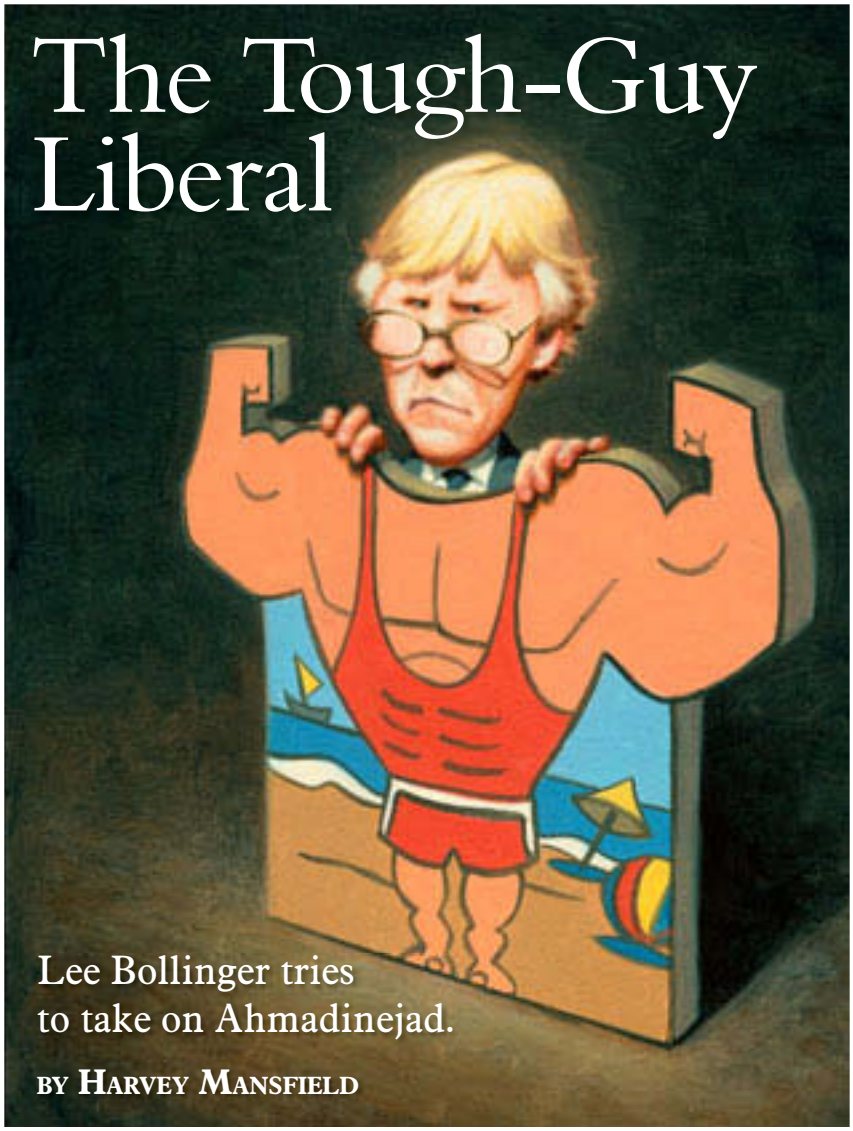
The Tough-Guy Liberal



Lee Bollinger tries to take on Ahmadinejad.

BY HARVEY MANSFIELD

In his grand confrontation with the Iranian president, President Lee Bollinger of Columbia University did his best to satisfy his American critics. He was tough, not soft; he avoided euphemisms, called the man whom he was addressing a "petty and cruel dictator." President Ahmadinejad had been invited to the Columbia World Leaders Forum, but in the event the neutral term *leader* was denied him, and he became the first invitee to Columbia's World Dictators Forum. Bollinger further declared that he was meeting with the "mind of evil." Sounds like President Bush! No liberal relativism here.

But Bollinger's critics should not be satisfied, nor should he. Bollinger did not do so well with his toughness as he believes, and he showed a very confused understanding of free speech.

He did not seem to see why President Ahmadinejad came to Columbia. He came there to impress a world audience with a moderate but telling criticism of the United States for trying to "manage the world." He wants to get nuclear weapons for Iran, and for this he needs to disarm and mollify doubtful or neutral powers who might oppose him.

A man who denies the Holocaust and calls for wiping Israel off the map did not need to show that he was tough. He could be moderate in Machiavellian style just by taking the edge off his toughness, just by explaining that in the spirit of inquiry one should always question conventional wisdom and that Israel would be wiped off the map by a free referendum of all Palestinians ("Jewish Palestinians, Muslim Palestinians and Christian Palestinians"). This might be enough to dissuade those many leaders and countries from acting against Iran's nuclear ambitions who rather agree that the United States is trying to manage the world and who in any event are not eager to act. Bollinger's invitation gave him the opportunity to complain in fairly polite terms that the United States, not Iran, is the bully. Ahmadinejad rather adeptly used Bollinger's toughness to align him with American bullying. In a visit to Iran, Bollinger would not be subjected to such abuse, one would suppose.

In his introduction Bollinger hinted openly that Iran might be subject to a "velvet revolution" of the kind that displaced Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. He even suggested that Columbia might facilitate this event by harboring Iranian dissenters. (By doing so, Bollinger did not say, Columbia might begin to make up for all the harm it has done by honoring, and glorifying, Edward Said and other anti-Western professors.) He added that the arrest of possible dissenters by the Iranian government was "unjustified." A dictatorship has no right of self-preservation by dictatorial means, implying that all regimes should be democratic—again a point of contact between President Bollinger and President Bush.

How true! But this suggests that free speech has political consequences in which Columbia as a university is involved. It is not simply a matter of free inquiry but of velvet revolution, at present focused on Iran but in principle worldwide. Columbia, like the United States, seems to want to manage the world.

Bollinger, however, presented his invitation to Ahmadinejad as the occasion for free speech, the particular business of a university. Free speech

JAMES BENNETT

Harvey Mansfield is professor of government at Harvard and a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

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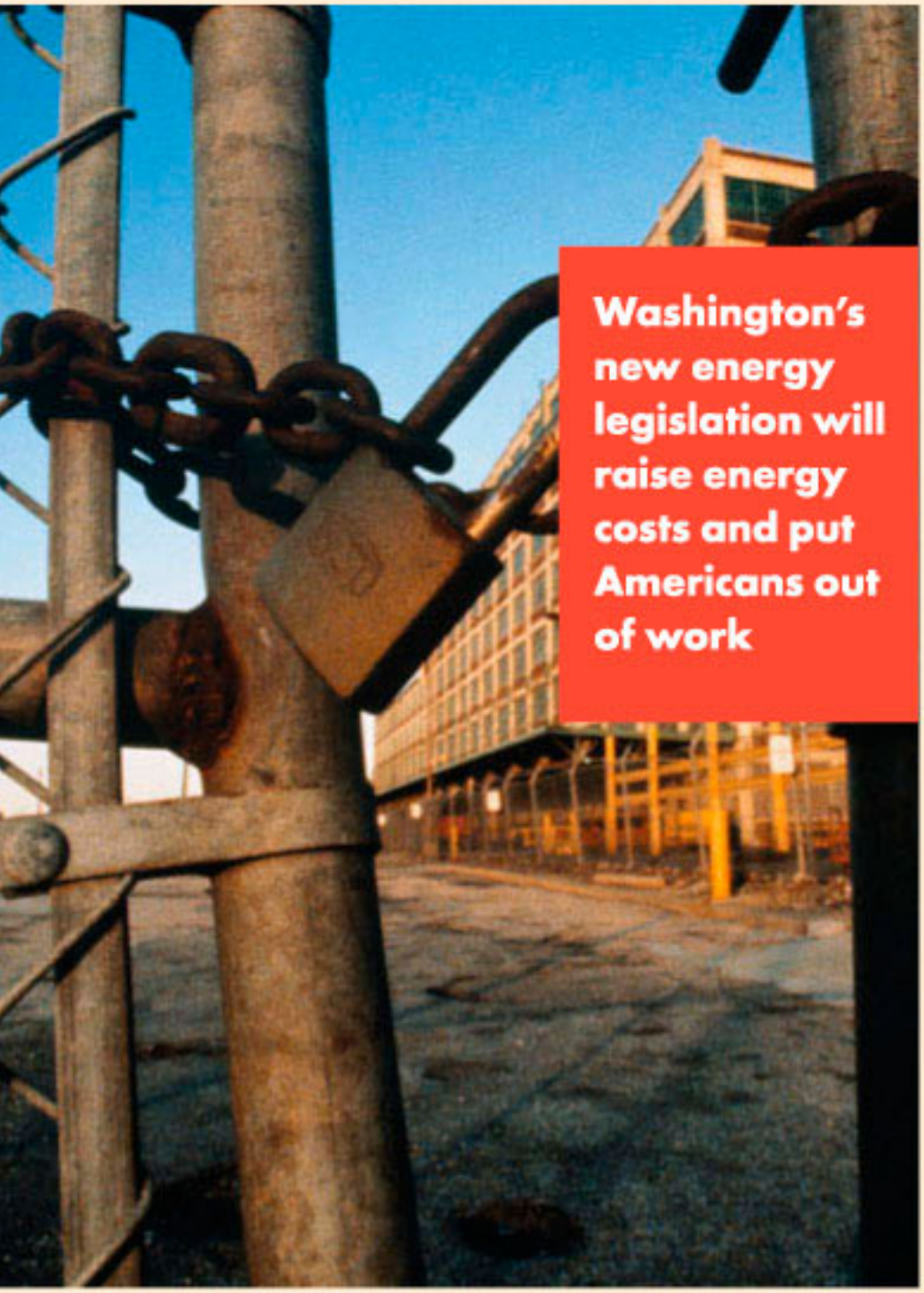
Can America's economy afford Congress' ~~energy~~ bill?

Layoffs, new taxes and cost spikes



Congress will soon consider sweeping new energy legislation that will raise energy taxes, cost American jobs and further limit the nation's access to domestic energy supplies.

The legislation's energy tax hikes and gasoline price controls will raise energy costs for American consumers, manufacturers and businesses – hurting economic growth and driving high-paying American jobs overseas. The legislation even reduces our ability to increase domestic oil and natural gas reserves here at home – increasing reliance on foreign sources of energy.

We need energy policies that support American jobs and increase supplies of energy from all sources to meet future generations' demand. Congress should reject these provisions of the energy bill and get to work on legislation to secure our energy future.

Reject Congress' Energy Bill

NAM National Association of Manufacturers

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

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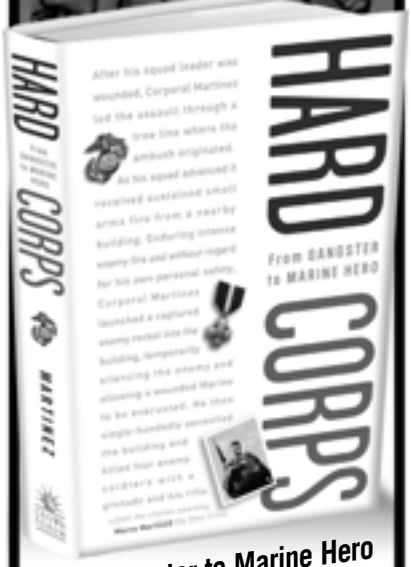
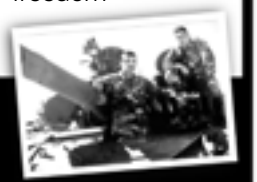
It took the Marines to make him a man.



From Gangster to Marine Hero

MARCO MARTINEZ

At seventeen, Marco Martinez was a thug—a gun-toting, car-stealing gang member. But at twenty-two, he received the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism under enemy fire in the Iraq War. Now, he tells the compelling story of his transformation—from life on the streets to a brutal boot camp and on to the deadliest streets of all, fighting for freedom in Iraq.



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is "robust debate" over ideas. We must always, he says, restrain our impulses against "engagement with ideas we dislike or fear." Yet, strange to say, Bollinger does not restrain his own impulses of this kind. He has nothing to say about Ahmadinejad's ideas or about any ideas. His reproaches to Ahmadinejad concern his deeds—arrests, executions, denial of the Holocaust, demanding the destruction of Israel, promoting terrorism, advancing a nuclear weapons program. These are matters the Secretary of State or anyone commenting on foreign policy might raise, but one would expect the president of a university, speaking for the university, and claiming that a university stands for ideas, to add something to the debate that is the peculiar contribution of a university. Instead, Bollinger dismissed Ahmadinejad's ideas before he heard them, saying that they will reveal a "fanatical mindset"—which in fact they did not. Imitating Bollinger, the questioners at the speech also avoided ideas.

It was Ahmadinejad who spoke of ideas. He began with the invocation of Almighty God and later said that piety was the only guide to life. Science arises from piety and is not opposed to religion. Science means "illumination" rather than control or command over nature, and so science includes but surpasses the experimental sciences of the West. Bollinger had said to Ahmadinejad that he wanted to express his revulsion "at what you stand for." Well, here it is: what is the basis of Bollinger's revulsion? Here is his chance to show up the "mind of evil," but he has nothing to say.

Ahmadinejad chose to present Iran as one country like all the others, not endowed with fanatical purpose and also not inspired with wrongful ambition like the government of a certain other country he could name. Appropriating the language of American liberals, he maintained it was necessary to look to the "root causes" of the disputes Bollinger complained of. He, the man of science in the expanded sense, could see better than we, who lack a sense of history—the wrong done to the Palestinians is 60 years old!—and are overcome by partiality. In Iran, he said, we respect women as mothers, and accordingly we believe in talk, not guns.

Ahmadinejad had a better understanding of the conditions of free speech than did Bollinger, who thought it was possible to invite and listen to an enemy without honoring him. So Columbia at this time was not guilty of honoring what should be dishonored. Well, yes, if you separate ideas from deeds. But can you do that? Bollinger the velvet revolutionary thinks you cannot, but Bollinger the apostle of inquiry thinks you can. You can refrain from honoring Ahmadinejad while still engaging his ideas by reading his speeches and writings and by listening to him. But you cannot help honoring him if you invite him to speak at a place where ideas are taken seriously for their truth. It's no doubt a good experience for students at Columbia and their innocent professors to spend an hour listening to a man who they have to know is lying to them through his teeth. This will help them learn about politics. But you cannot pretend that no tuition is being paid for what you learn.

Ahmadinejad made another instructive point. He said to Bollinger that in Iran, people don't introduce speakers by insulting them, but rather give them respect. Bollinger, however, seems to think that free speech is quite compatible with offering insults; he gave the impression that insults are speech at its freest and finest. He also believes that freedom of inquiry can go together with the desire to "express revulsion." The latter is the hope of universities ever since the late sixties. But insults harm free speech by drawing attention away from the ideas of speakers, and expressing revulsion harms inquiry by discouraging or preventing cool, dispassionate analysis.

By inviting Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to speak at Columbia, President Bollinger got himself confused between the business of politics and the virtue of a university. He tried to bring his university into the political arena, and he meant well to our country, but instead of embarrassing our common enemy he embarrassed himself. ♦

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Laser Printers: the Silent Killer

The wisdom of Russia.

BY REUBEN F. JOHNSON

Kiev

In the decade I spent living in Moscow I marveled at how many Russian companies, government offices, banks, and other places of business continued to use dot-matrix printers long after the rest of the world had converted to laser models. Even in the late 1990s, a visit to a currency exchange or a pharmacy was like a journey back in time. One's ears would perk up at the faintly familiar but almost forgotten zzzzz zzzzz zzzzz-ing sound of the printer head sliding back and forth across the machine-fed paper roll.

What explained this persistence of previous-generation technology? Was it a hangover of the Soviet-era practice of sticking with an old innovation long after the rest of the world had abandoned it? To this day rock stars swear by the sound of amplifiers powered by Russian-made vacuum tubes—a business everyone else gave up when the transistor came along. In prior decades a similar refusal to move on to the next step in man's innovations kept Soviet factories churning out steam-powered locomotives long after almost every other nation had switched to diesel-powered railroad engines.

One day an astute colleague writing in one of the Moscow papers unraveled the mystery. The reason for the former Evil Empire's clinging to the noisy, clumsy dot-matrix printer with its messy printer ribbons and tiny little paper dots from the edges of the sheets scattered about was precisely because they *were* noisy and clumsy.

A dot-matrix printer running is like an old Soviet factory. Everyone may be sitting around and talking on the phone trying to scam a way to make money on the side, and no one may actually be doing productive work, but all of the noise and clanking of machinery creates the illusion of activity. Work *must* be happening because, otherwise, why would there be so much commotion? Also, at the end of several seconds of zzzzz-ing and the ka-chunk, ka-chunk of the paper feeder, there is that most prized of all Soviet phenomena: a product. From all that zinging and jolted motion there is indeed proof that someone has been hard at it producing that receipt that tells you how many rubles you just received for your $100 note. Never mind that you will crumple it up and throw it away the instant you walk out the door.

The old dot-matrix machine—it seemed—was headed for Trotsky's famous 'dustbin of history,' never to be seen again.

In comparison a laser printer seemed too smooth, too elegant, too silent—too symbolic of the inhumane nature of capitalism. A piece of paper simply appears after what seems like no effort at all. Who cares that a laser printer is so cheap now it costs less than a dot-matrix machine did 12 years ago? It just does not seem natural in a country where it has been customary never to assign 10 people to do a job that 100 could do just as well.

Some forces of progress cannot be held back forever, though. In recent years the laser printer has finally crept into Russian and other former Soviet workplaces. The old dot-matrix machine—it seemed—was headed for Trotsky's famous "dustbin of history," never to be seen again.

But not so fast! An article in the September 26 *Moscow Times* suggests these pre-Pentium era dinosaurs may yet be saved from extinction. It suggests that all along the Russians—who have poisoned their rivers, seas, and lakes and who have some of the worst air quality in their major cities of any industrialized nation in the world—were cleverer than we thought. Somehow they knew that carbon monoxide, asbestos, chemical waste dumps, and Polonium-210 were as nothing compared with the real threat to human health: the silent but deadly killer known as the laser printer.

In Australia a study of laser printers conducted at Queensland University of Technology found that a quarter of the machines tested were "high particle emitters." (The results of the study were published in a report in the American Chemical Society's *Environmental Science and Technology* journal.) "Ultrafine particles [of toner] are of most concern because they can penetrate deep into the lungs where they can pose a significant health threat," said professor Lidia Morawska, who conducted the study.

Russia, which still has the ability to return to the dot-matrix machine because there are so many of them around, may yet save its population. But, elsewhere in the world, where offices have known nothing but laser printers for many years? The consequences are grim to contemplate.

The study finds ultrafine particles to be as hazardous as inhaling cigarette smoke. (Hewlett-Packard and other manufacturers of laser printers mock these findings, but then they would, wouldn't they?) These toner particles are not like the annoying, working-as-a-waitress-in-a-bar-ruined-my-skin second-hand smoke.

Reuben F. Johnson writes frequently on Russian politics.

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This is the real McCoy. This is like smoking some of those filterless Camels that you were "brainwashed" into thinking were "cool" when you were only six years old—thanks to the sunglasses and scarf-wearing Old Joe Camel mascot. If the Huckabee campaign finds out about this, Hewlett-Packard may replace al Qaeda as public enemy number one.

The next steps are obvious, alas. Users of laser printers will be—just as cigar smokers like me are already—banned from all public life. No more laser printers in a closed space, a bar, an airport, or within 10 miles of a pregnant woman. Laser printer users will be ostracized and not allowed to print anything within 200 yards of the entrance to any public building, (except in enlightened jurisdictions like Montgomery County, Md., where they will be summarily sent off to re-education centers without benefit of due process).

Next, all laser printers will be required to undergo annual emissions testing and sport state and county inspections stickers. Then—well, that will be your problem.

Here in Ukraine where I live, I can stand out on the main street of my city breathing air so smoke-filled that you could cut it with a knife. I can read about the toxic chemical levels in fish in some local river being 20 times higher than the lethal dose for a sumo wrestler. But at least I can thank God I live in a country where people were wise enough not to be seduced by the technological wiles of the deadly laser printer. ♦

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The Saffron Revolution

Bloody but hopeful days in Burma.

BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

At this writing, on Friday, September 28, the Burmese military regime has brought its heavy hammer down on the thousands of people demonstrating against the country's 45-year-old dictatorship. Police and troops have fired on protesters, killing at least 13 people. Buddhist monasteries have been raided and sealed, including the Shwedagon Pagoda, the most famous and beautiful building in Rangoon, and some 200 monks are under arrest. Internet traffic, which dissidents used to report events to the world, has been cut.

It may be pardonable to begin comment on a land almost completely sealed off from the rest of the world with the only trace of humor in its situation—the difficulty some English-speaking newsrooms have had in deciding whether to adopt the nationalist renaming of the country and its main city, from Burma and Rangoon to Myanmar and Yangon. The *Washington Post* sticks with the former; the *New York Times* and other leading dailies prefer the new system, though the mouthful "Myanmarese" has failed to gain currency, leaving pretty much everyone still saying "Burmese."

Whatever one calls the country, its history since World War II has been one of almost unrelieved tragedy. Ruled as a part of British India from 1886 to 1948, it was once rich enough to be aptly symbolized by the gold of its pagodas—especially the thousands in the town of Pagan. An earthquake in 1975 damaged many of Pagan's treasures, but that destruction was merely physical—nothing compared with the political and psychological cruelties Burma has endured.

Stephen Schwartz is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Burma has been subjected to just about every form of political and governmental brutalization the 20th century—and now the 21st—could offer. It has much in common with other victims of state socialism, including Cuba and the former Yugoslavia.

Like Castro's fiefdom, it fell from significant prosperity to extreme poverty, becoming a backward, ramshackle place. Like Yugoslavia, it was never a genuine nation-state. Although the *CIA World Fact Book* (which calls it Burma) claims the population of 47 million is 68 percent ethnic Burman, some question that figure. The many minority groups in the northern and eastern highlands, usually called "hill tribes," probably comprise at least a third of the population. They include several major and dozens of minor identities, with Karens and Shans being the best known, because of their long armed struggle for freedom.

While ethnic Burmans are typically Buddhist, the Karens are Christians and the Shans have their own religion mixing Buddhist and animist elements. A Muslim minority spread throughout the country is indistinguishable from the Burman majority in language, but has also been violently repressed, and hundreds of thousands of Burmese Muslims have fled west to neighboring Bangladesh.

Burma has not enjoyed real peace in over 50 years. Already in the 1930s it saw growing nationalist agitation against British rule. With the outbreak of World War II, "the Thirty Comrades," a group of Burmese patriots opposed to Britain, were recruited by

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Thousands of monks defy a military ban and march in Rangoon against the ruling junta, September 25.

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the Japanese and trained in Tokyo to lead a "Burma Independence Army" (BIA). In 1942, the Japanese invaded Burma. They were welcomed as liberators by the anti-British populace, and the BIA collaborated with them in ruling the country. Quickly, however, the new invaders' atrocious behavior alienated the people, and the resulting resistance movement had a strong radical-leftist flavor.

The leader of the collaborationist, then anti-Japanese, forces was General Aung San, the most charismatic and popular of the nationalists. His assassination in 1947 was a national trauma. With the fall of the Japanese, Communist and ethnic independence fighters such as the Karens sought to establish power in their own enclaves. Even after independence in 1948 and the establishment of a nationalist/populist government—a "light" one-party state—turmoil continued, fed partly by China, which treats Burma as its satellite.

In the "nonaligned" dreamland of the 1950s, when figures like Tito in Yugoslavia, Nasser in Egypt, and Sukarno in Indonesia (that last having also previously cooperated with Japanese invaders) claimed to lead the former colonies toward progress, Burma was a major player. Its representative at the United Nations, U Thant, served as U.N. secretary-general from 1961 to 1971, even after Ne Win (one of the original Thirty Comrades) and the military seized control of the country in 1962.

Ne Win committed Burma to economic and political ruin by adopting a scheme called "the Burmese Way to Socialism," based on total isolation, the looting of the economy for the benefit of the military caste, and continued suppression of the minority peoples. He was a confirmed believer in astrology and numerology, who reconfigured the national currency, the *kyat*, in bills of 45 and 90 units in the hope of increasing his own longevity.

Ne Win left power in 1988, the year of a democratic movement that the military suppressed by killing thousands, and which brought Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) to the fore. Esteemed as the daughter of Aung

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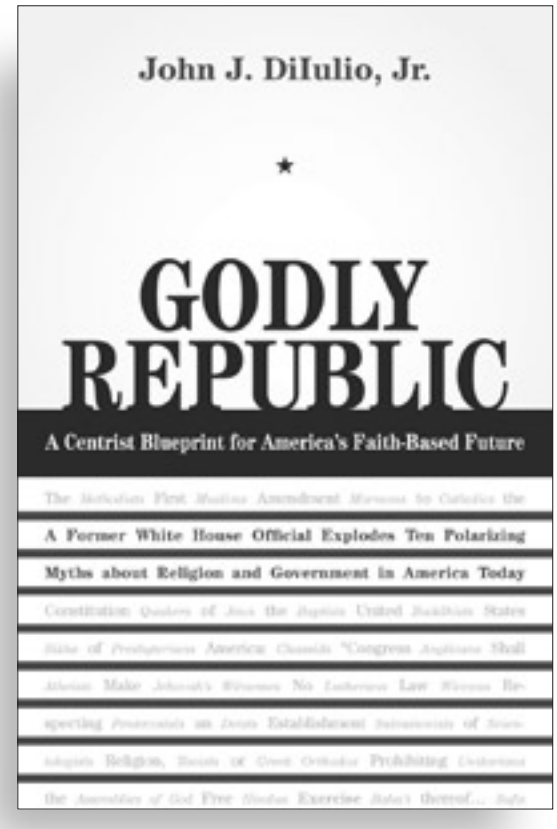

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San, she commanded respect in her own right for her dignity and simplicity. Since the late 1980s, and even after she was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, Aung San Suu Kyi has been in and out of house arrest, where she remains today.

Burma's current leader is General Than Shwe, another megalomaniac, who is busy moving the capital from Rangoon to a "new city" 200 miles to the north called Naypidaw. Than Shwe seems bent on delivering another lesson to his subjects and the world about the defiance of Rangoon's military rulers. But before he shut down the Internet, the whole world saw the affecting sight of Buddhist monks and nuns, in their maroon and saffron robes, peacefully protected and assisted by ordinary citizens, filling the streets of Rangoon and Mandalay in orderly protest.

Some Western pundits have argued that a China now oriented toward capitalist growth has an incentive to dissuade the Burmese army from administering a bloodbath. Such optimism about Beijing, however, is vain. The only hope for the rescue of the tormented peoples of Burma resides in the solidarity expressed by President George W. Bush at the U.N. General Assembly when he said, "Americans are outraged by the situation in Burma. The ruling junta remains unyielding, yet the people's desire for freedom is unmistakable."

Cynics may decry the president's stand as a mere effort to renew the vision of democratization that accompanied U.S. intervention in Iraq. But Burma—like Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzia before it—shows that the weak links in the global chain of tyranny are breaking, one by one, and that the worldwide movement for entrepreneurship, accountability, and popular sovereignty can assert itself, with or without the help of outsiders. For Americans and all haters of oppression, the message is clear: The United States should show effective support for the aspirations of Burma's diverse citizens; tougher sanctions against the regime are only the beginning. ♦

They Always Blame Reagan . . .

His backing of the Afghan mujahedeen did not create the Taliban.

BY PAUL KENGOR

It has become a truism in liberal circles that Ronald Reagan brought us Osama bin Laden and the Taliban. The accusation could already be heard mere weeks after 9/11. Articles developing the "blowback" thesis metastasized around the Internet. Given the staying power of ideologically convenient misinformation, it is worth reviewing the facts of the Reagan administration's support for the mujahedeen, the fighters who resisted the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and their link with today's Islamic extremists.

The USSR, it will be recalled, invaded Afghanistan on Christmas Eve 1979. The Soviets proceeded to brutalize a country that, though still very poor, had made surprising progress since the 1950s. How would the United States respond?

One man who spoke up promptly was Ronald Reagan, then a candidate for the Republican nomination for president. In a campaign speech in Florida in January 1980, Reagan urged Washington to provide Stinger antiaircraft missiles to Afghans fighting the Red Army. He called specifically for supplying the rebels with "shoulder-launched, heat-seeking missiles that can shoot down Soviet helicopter gunships."

In due course, the Carter administration did aid the mujahedeen. Then in November 1980, Reagan was elected president, and throughout his eight years in office he continued assisting the Afghan rebels. Those American Stingers ultimately became the bullet to the chest of the Soviet campaign, central to the Kremlin's devastating withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, and a vital contribution to the demise of the USSR and the end of the Cold War.

The mujahedeen—literally, "strugglers"—were a force specific to the Soviet war in Afghanistan. They comprised an assortment of factions. There were Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns, fundamentalist Sunnis and moderate Sunnis, Shiites, clerics and non-clerics, Wahhabis, Islamists with links to madrassas in Iran and Islamists connected to madrassas in Pakistan, extremists who came out of Hezbollah and extremists with roots in the Muslim Brotherhood. There were even religious reformers who favored a secular state—the polar opposite of the theocracy the Taliban would one day impose on Afghanistan.

While it is true that many of these mujahedeen would later make up the Taliban, others would oppose it and help to drive it from power. In particular, many former mujahedeen joined the Northern Alliance, the Afghan coalition that fought alongside U.S. troops in October and November 2001 to overthrow the Taliban.

Today, some former members of the mujahedeen are part of the democratic movement trying to move Afghanistan back to the days of promise and modernization that preceded the Soviet ruination of the country. This explains how it is that Hamid Karzai, elected president in

Paul Kengor is the author of The Crusader: Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism *(HarperCollins, 2006) and* God and Hillary Clinton: A Spiritual Life *(HarperCollins, 2007). He is associate professor of political science at Grove City College.*

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2004, could say fondly, "The people of Afghanistan remember Mr. Ronald Reagan's assistance to Afghanistan during the years of 'jihad' against the Soviets." Karzai is attempting to steer his country toward democracy, a difficult undertaking that has had its bumps. The transition has been flawed, but it is going forward. Certainly, no one could liken Karzai to the Taliban chieftain, Mullah Omar.

Mohammad Ashraf Azeem, a columnist for the Pakistani newspaper *Islamabad Khabrain*, likewise celebrates Reagan "for checking the Soviet advanc`e in Afghanistan. As a result of this [Afghan] war, the Soviet Union was disintegrated, and its dream of expanding its influence beyond Afghanistan was shattered once and for all." There are numerous voices like his in the region. And on the ground in Afghanistan, when U.S. Special Forces get a tip leading them to one of the fanatical thugs who once cheered the stoning of women in stadiums, it typically comes from someone who opposed the Soviet invader in the 1980s.

That said, it is true that we do not know precisely the percentages of mujahedeen who subsequently joined al Qaeda, the Taliban, the Northern Alliance, and the small but growing band of liberal democrats inside Afghanistan.

But this we do know: To assume that every member of the mujahedeen resembled the 9/11 hijackers is to engage in stereotyping of a kind that usually enrages liberals. Afghans were intimately familiar with the vicious nature of the Marxist regime that the militantly atheist Soviet Union had tried to prop up in Kabul, just as they knew the egregious tactics employed by the Red Army, from the deployment of chemical weapons to the use of booby-trapped toys. It is understandable that many Afghans—not all of them reactionary Islamic extremists—fought for freedom from these killers.

The mujahedeen would have existed irrespective of U.S. policy—ditto for Osama bin Laden. The Afghan resistance coalesced without us. Our objective was to help it win, and thereby further undermine the Soviet Union at a desperate time in its history. It was the Soviet invasion that drew Osama bin Laden to Afghanistan, not U.S. aid to the resistance. As Olivier Roy wrote in *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War*: "The mujahedeen consisted of . . . elements or factions that all interpreted Islam differently but were united in a common cause—to expel the infidel Soviets."

Finally, anyone who would blame Reagan for supporting the mujahedeen must also point the finger at Democrats: As noted above, it was Jimmy Carter who first began aiding the mujahedeen, at the urging of top advisers like Zbigniew Brzezinski and with the support of a Democratic Congress. And many Democratic congressmen and senators continued to vote to authorize the aid through the Reagan years. Helping the mujahedeen was a no-brainer: It was the right thing to do. ♦

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Over to You, California

Maryland's high court upholds marriage.

BY DAVID M. WAGNER

On September 18, in *Conaway v. Deane*, Maryland became the latest in a string of non-Bible Belt states whose high courts have declined to impose recognition of same-sex marriages.

Last year, the same result came from New York and Washington. On the other hand, New Jersey's Supreme Court gave gay marriage advocates more than it denied them: It said no to same-sex marriage per se, but then required the state to recognize "civil unions." Gay marriage opponents argue (rightly) that this issue is better decided by legislatures than by courts, so New York's legislature is moving ahead with a same-sex marriage bill that Governor Spitzer, unlike Governor Pataki, will almost certainly sign (though it's being effectively blocked by Joseph Bruno, the Republican head of the state senate). Also on the horizon is both judicial and legislative action in California, and possible legislative action in New Jersey.

The voluminous Maryland opinion, accompanied by extensive dissents, has several noteworthy features:

(1) Maryland's Equal Rights Amendment cannot be read to require same-sex marriage, the court found. Here a historic role-reversal is going on: To win passage of the various ERAs, both the federal one and its duplicates in the states, ERA advocates minimized its scope. Because the Maryland ERA tracks the language of the (failed) federal ERA, the *Conaway* opinion quotes heavily from congressional ERA supporters and proponents in elite law reviews. Back in the day, ERA opponents, led by Phyllis Schlafly, argued that courts might interpret the amendment to require gay marriage. The majority of the Maryland court in *Conaway* simply reaches back into the denials of ERA proponents, and takes them at their word. (The timing of Maryland's law banning recognition of same-sex marriage—1973—may have something to do with its state ERA, enacted in 1972.)

(2) Equal Protection analysis: The Maryland Supreme Court joins the majority of federal and state courts in holding that "gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons" are not "suspect or quasi-suspect classifications." "In spite of the unequal treatment suffered possibly by Appellees and certainly a substantial portion of citizens similarly situated," the court writes, "we are not persuaded that gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons are so politically powerless that they are entitled to 'extraordinary protection from the majoritarian political process.' To the contrary, it appears that, at least in Maryland, advocacy to eliminate discrimination against gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons based on their orientation has met with growing successes in the legislative and executive branches of government."

Therefore, legislation that treats them differently from straight people need only pass the most lenient level of review, the "rational basis" test. This test is met by the state's interest in procreation and family life. Which brings us to:

(3) Fundamental rights: Isn't marriage one, and hasn't the U.S. Supreme

David M. Wagner teaches constitutional law at Regent University and blogs at ninomania.blogspot.com.

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Court said so? Yes—but always, and only, in connection with relationships that are by nature procreative. The history of the legal treatment of marriage in the United States (reaching back well before the term "fundamental rights" was thrown around with such abandon as it is now) shows that marriage was always considered both a natural, pre-political institution *and* something about which the state can and should make rules for the common good. So, there's a "fundamental right to marry," but you still can't marry your sister, or your mother, or a 12-year-old, or a tree, or anyone at all while you're already married, or someone of the same sex as yourself.

Absolutist "rights talk," of the sort used by same-sex marriage advocacy groups and aspiring California politicians, is not about "protection" or "equality" or "justice": It's about blanking the mind so that we don't ask questions such as, What is marriage for? Why do we legally recognize *this* kind of human relationship, out of all the human relationships that exist? Why have societies that have been all over the map on how they think about homosexual acts been as one in not even remotely considering them a basis for marriage?

As the legal history nicely amassed by the Maryland court shows, the right to marry has always been linked to procreation. That link has been emphasized by the Supreme Court, or at least mentioned by it as an important component of the marriage right, even in those "privacy" cases most relied on by gay marriage advocates. That link has frayed once or twice, in the prison cases: In *Skinner* v. *Oklahoma* (1942), Mr. Skinner, being an inmate, had no immediate marriage prospects, but he might have had, when his sentence was up, so the part of his sentence that he was challenging—sterilization—plainly interfered with his right to marry and to procreate. And *Turner* v. *Safley* (1987) involved a desired jailhouse wedding: No conjugal visits or parenting were in immediate prospect. But neither inmate was a lifer, and so (as the Maryland court points out) consummation and childrearing were future possibilities. So the link between procreation and the right to marriage bends but never breaks.

The procreation connection will be a factor in California's *In re: Marriage Cases*, mentioned above. There, a group of family law and policy scholars (Hadley Arkes, Robert P. George, Leon Kass, James Q. Wilson, Steven Calabresi, and others), represented by attorney Joshua Baker of Maggie Gallagher's Institute for Marriage and Public Policy (iMAPP), argues in an amicus brief for the positive value to society of marriage as traditionally understood.

If they thought advocates on the other side would be hostile, perhaps they weren't prepared for those on their "own" side. California's attorney general—former Gov. Jerry Brown, considered a friend of gay rights when he was governor in the 1970s—has specifically repudiated iMAPP's brief—although as attorney general he is at least nominally supporting California's statute. The scholars' latest brief opens: "Our brief filed at the appellate level was inappropriately repudiated by the Attorney General, who seriously misunderstood our argument. We do not here assert the state's interest in marriage is grounded in negative views about gay people or their families. Instead we argue that marriage has a historic public and legal purpose which is not only rationally related, but deeply rooted in facts specific and unique to opposite sex couples."

The heart of the scholars' brief centers on an argument that Maggie Gallagher has often made in public debate: Society needs future generations; sex tends to make babies, even in the contraceptive era; and a child needs a mother and a father. Thus, the case for traditional marriage is hard to make to someone who thinks human extinction is desirable or a matter of indifference (a value judgment); or who thinks contraception is flawless (contrary to fact); or who thinks that mothers and fathers are interchangeable parenting units (the most common objection).

Instead, Brown's brief defending California's restriction of marriage to opposite-sex couples argues that marriage is a "constitutionally insignificant label" under California law, and that it confers no benefits not equally secured by domestic partnerships, which already exist. To win on that basis might not be to win at all.

Maryland's *Conaway* decision is an important step in the marriage debate; but so too will be the California court, and also legislation pending in New York and (ironically, considering the fuss being made in its courts) California. ♦

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NEXT STOP KANDAHAR

The counterinsurgency begins in Kansas

Afghan National Police finishing their sweep of the "Afghan Village" during a training exercise.

PHOTOGRAPHS: U.S. ARMY / MASTER SGT. JACK LEE

By Mark Hemingway

Captain Steve Gerber, the ranking American soldier on the scene, scans the perimeter of the Afghan village for signs of activity. There's a roar in the distance and a Humvee is hurtling down the rough dirt road, kicking up mud in its wake from the recent rain.

The Humvee makes a hard right at speed, heads to the far corner of the village, spins around, and stops. The Hummer's gunner pops up like a jack-in-the-box and points the mounted machine gun at a small gully of rocks and trees at the bottom of the slope that marks the edge of town. Seemingly out of nowhere, three Afghan soldiers materialize, working in tandem with the Humvee, running out ahead of the vehicle. One pulls up short, takes a knee, and shoulders his rifle, covering the gully at a 45-degree angle opposite the Humvee's position. The other two A and As—U.S. Army slang for Afghan Army soldiers—hit the deck directly in front of the Humvee and quickly bring their rifles up to the prone position.

Before long, there's signaling and shouting amidst intermittent gunfire, with the Humvee's mounted .50 caliber machine gun sending a hail of bullets right over the heads of the two Afghan soldiers. The shooting stops right about the same time as a bus barrels up the dirt road. The soldiers hold their positions and about a dozen Afghan National Policemen pour out of the bus, fanning out across the village. They search both homes and any people in the street.

After some shouting and a small ruckus, the policemen focus on a small room in the second story of a building just behind the corner of the great domed mosque in the center of town. Two handcuffed men—one wearing fatigues, the

Mark Hemingway is staff reporter at National Review Online.

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other in a long white robe he's nearly tripping over—are pushed and dragged through the village towards the bus. The policemen have also captured one rocket-propelled grenade and an IED, consisting of a metal box with miscellaneous electronics and a nine-volt battery.

Gerber saunters over to where the two Afghan Army officers in charge are standing.

There are warm greetings all around. In a few seconds, Gerber goes from all-business army officer to aw-shucks Midwesterner. The joint Afghan-American mission is a success. In fact, it was such a success you could almost believe you're not in Kansas anymore.

The Afghan village is a fake. It's nothing more than a handful of carefully stacked and modified shipping containers set up in the prairie on the outskirts of Fort Riley. The base is ringed with mock villages and tactical training areas. They're given Arabic or Afghan names, but are generally referred to by their army designation. This village is known as "Cluster City Five."

The terrorists and village dwellers in the exercise are role players supplied by a defense contractor. Most are young males recruited from nearby Kansas State—all too happy to play army for $14 an hour. During their downtime, they sit around in the rusted shipping containers playing cards, joking, and generally enjoying themselves.

Gerber seemed like a pretty average guy—brown hair, normal sized, happy to chit-chat about his beloved Cleveland Browns picking up Notre Dame quarterback Brady Quinn in the NFL draft. He nearly flunked out of high school and joined up only as a last resort. Now thanks to a few years of army discipline, he's a West Point grad and a walking recruitment poster. He was here "O.C.-ing the drill"—army parlance for acting as observer controller. His job was to make sure that the exercise happened as it was supposed to happen and intervene if it wasn't. "The basic idea here is that this team is going to try to set up an outer cordon to keep people from getting in. Then you want to set up an inner cordon, which is going to stop people from getting out. And they're going to be coordinating with everybody to make sure everything is kosher," Gerber says.

One thing about the exercise is unmistakably real: the Afghan soldiers. Currently, there are about 90 Afghan soldiers and police participating in training exercises with U.S. soldiers at Fort Riley. Lloyd Robbins—an Army brat

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from nearby Junction City who played the terrorist in the white robe—confirms that "It's a lot more real being arrested by Afghans." He laughs, claiming they roughed him up.

The Afghans certainly take their jobs as training partners very seriously. The Afghan captain overseeing the A and As participating in the exercise tells me that his family fought both the Soviets and the Taliban. In typical Afghan fashion he looks at least ten years older than he likely is, but his face is so dignified that it might as well have been cut from stone.

"The main thing for us is the fight with terrorists, because it is not only our country, it is all around the world. So our country is important, but other countries are, too, so we have to fight to finish our job," he says. "We have to help each other and share all our ideas together to first fight terrorism, and, second, rebuild our country."

Fort Riley is two hours west of Kansas City, just off Interstate 70 in-between Junction City and Manhattan. It's old: The base was established in 1853, and Custer and his 7th Cavalry were stationed here during the time of Little Big Horn. Back then it was about the farthest west the U.S. Army could go before heading off into the frontier.

A sign at the entrance announces that, true to its heritage, Riley is still a "Forward Operating Base" and admonishes visitors to "be prepared for simulated battlefield activities." For thousands of soldiers, this is the last stop before shipping out to Afghanistan or Iraq: 60 days of counterinsurgency instruction that might amount to the most important training of their careers.

The scale of counterinsurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan means the Army is stressing cooperation with local military and police to an unprecedented degree. Just a few years ago, the kind of on-the-ground tactical coordination with foreign militaries and police that the U.S. Army now demands infantry soldiers execute with precision was the domain of Special Forces. Today, it's the new paradigm of warfare.

The U.S. military is a victim of "catastrophic success." Its capabilities so dwarf any potential rival's that insurgency within a civilian population is no longer the enemy's last refuge in warfare but his preferred strategy. (In his lectures, the influential military strategist Thomas P.M. Barnett is fond of pointing out that it's been so long since the U.S. military shot down an enemy aircraft in combat,

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The U.S. military is a victim of 'catastrophic success.' Its capabilities so dwarf any potential rival's that insur
enemy's last refuge in warfare but his preferred strategy. The Army's answer is to stress cooperation with loc

Lloyd Robbins, in the role of a terrorist, getting 'roughed up' by an Afghan Army soldier.

that the Air Force pilot who last did is now a general.)

That's just the tactical problem. The political problem is just as monumental. In his recent book *The Utility of Force*, British General Rupert Smith notes:

> There is an acceptance in many circles that we now conduct operations rather than wars, but we still expect them to deliver a definitive military victory in its own right that will resolve a political problem, rather than one that contributes to and supports the resolution by other means.

Smith advocates a revolution in thinking about war that would view confrontations as intertwined political and military conflicts. "What will be technologically and tactically appropriate in one case will be inappropriate in another; but what will remain constant is the new approach," he writes.

The Army's answer to these problems is the Military Transition Team (MiTT), and it is the job of the 1st Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division to train them at Fort Riley. Lieutenant Colonel Curtis Hudson briefs me on the 1st Brigade Task Organization Transition Team Training. He is a tall, imposing figure, and when he quotes T.E. Lawrence with his East Tennessee drawl it's so in sync with preconceived notions about what army colonels should be as to be reassuring. He's hobbling around on an air cast—he fell down the stairs at home, and is mildly embarrassed his story is not exactly Purple Heart material. Fortunately, his military duties at hand are light, consisting of a PowerPoint presentation. But Hudson knows that wars must now be won off the battlefield as well as on and wields his laser pointer with as much accuracy as his M-4.

As Hudson explains, MiTT training is a major part

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rgency within a civilian population is no longer the
al military and police to an unprecedented degree.

of the Pentagon's new approach to counterinsurgency. A MiTT embeds with an Iraqi or Afghan unit. The team itself is small—10-15 soldiers, usually of more advanced rank, from staff sergeant to colonel—but designed to work with almost any size unit from battalion to division. Their goal is to make the local troops self-sustaining: tactically, operationally, and logistically. Aside from providing training and expertise, MiTTs also provide a huge morale boost to their foreign counterparts as they have the power to call in air support and reinforcements otherwise not at the disposal of the local police and military. The MiTT should encourage the locals to go on the offensive and gain the confidence needed to later fight on their own: a necessary component of our we-stand-down-as-they-stand-up exit strategy. Transition teams also leave a small footprint in hostile areas that might be stirred up by a larger U.S. presence. Such small groups remain in the shadows and emphasize the achievement of Iraqi and Afghan forces—something that greatly reduces the political fallout of U.S. operations.

Just as the transition teams are a departure from traditional tactics, so is the training. There's still plenty of time on the range and field artillery exercises during these last 60 days before heading to a combat zone. It's just that the MiTTs get substantial amounts of counterinsurgency training, not normally available to infantry soldiers. Their schedule is packed six days a week to find the time for language training and cultural immersion relevant to the counterinsurgency mission in Iraq or Afghanistan and still keep up with the necessary physical and combat training.

"We're probably the only armor brigade in the Army that has Special Forces soldiers assigned to it," Hudson notes. Special Forces are much better trained on counterinsurgency fighting than traditional Army, and their presence falls within another unique feature of the brigade—the Directorate of Cultural Immersion and Counter Insurgency (DCC). Out of 825 people in the brigade, 120 are assigned to the DCC. Because the MiTT is to be embedded with local forces, its members need a strong grasp of the language and customs. "We've actually got folks that have lived in those countries that are here to help us understand where we're going and how to operate in that environment," Hudson says.

The brigade fosters visits from Afghan security forces for joint training. The Cluster City Five exercise had MiTTs practicing the coordination of a joint operation with Afghan soldiers. Such exercises bring all of their combat, language, and cultural training together. (Though it has yet to happen, they're currently working on arranging visits from Iraqi forces.) So far at Fort Riley, they've trained and deployed about 3,000 soldiers to participate in transition teams, and Hudson says about 934 are in training at the moment. The U.S. military has thrown its full weight behind the strategy. When it comes to training, "If we ask for something, we generally get it," he says.

Cultural immersion training begins not on the battlefield, but in the rows of Fort Riley's modular classrooms. In one class, a middle-aged Afghan man from Seattle is dutifully laying out the basics of cultural sensitivity in his home country—don't show the soles of your feet, if you give the thumbs up sign it's the same as the finger to an Afghan, don't say hello to women on the street . . .

"We can't tip our Kevlar and say 'Howdy, Ma'am'?," asks one soldier incredulously. Following up, another soldier asks, "Has there been a big problem with this? Because we're a very friendly people—I'm from Tennessee." The class erupts in laughter. Judging by the various twangs and steamrolled vowel combinations among the questioner's chattering classmates, if not for the South, the United States might literally be fielding An Army of One.

In the classroom next door are two Afghan-Americans wearing traditional tribal dress: Kamal, an Uzbek speaker, and a Dari speaker named Torjmon who goes by Tony. Both have worked in Afghanistan as military translators and the students take advantage of their expertise. They discuss the nitty-gritty of getting a working cell phone in Afghanistan, and one soldier even asks about the movements of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a warlord renowned for his heroism against the Soviets but now wanted by the United States for trying to overthrow President Karzai. It would be safe to say that the soldiers' understanding of the situation surpasses that of most congressmen.

Of course not every area of cultural understanding is a launching pad for sophisticated discourse. One soldier asks Tony if there's anything that U.S. soldiers keep doing wrong. Tony doesn't skip a beat. "Yeah, you guys can't keep you're a—holes shut!" he says. It seems that the Army-issue Meals Ready to Eat (affectionately known in the service as "Three-Lies-in-One") combined with constant physical labor is a recipe for gastrointestinal distress.

"You eat your MRE's all the time and you just"—Tony lifts his leg exaggeratedly—"AHHHHHHHHHH. It's very disrespectful." Tony's trying to impart a serious lesson, but the class is doubled over laughing. Of course, he's also a bit bitter. On his last tour working as a translator in

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Afghanistan, thanks to the actions of one particularly rude colonel in front of some Afghan Army officers, "My name changed from Torjmon to Fartmon." More laughter.

After class Tony and Kamal both head for the mess hall. It turns out that Kamal's from Northern Virginia and Tony's from Orange County. ("How could you not love it?," Tony says of Southern California.) They're both very pleased by what they see in the classroom and elsewhere. All the language and customs instructors actually live with the soldiers in the barracks. They answer questions and correct the soldiers' pronunciation 24/7.

"So far we've had some great, great teams at camp and they're awesome. And willing to learn," Tony says.

Kamal agrees. "They are putting in the effort to learn, pick up the language, the customs, the culture. We correct [them] and they fix it the next time. So the effort is there," he says.

In the back of the cafeteria a big screen television announces that al Qaeda leader Abu Ayyub al-Masri has been killed. The information later turned out to be false, but for the time being, there's scattered cheering throughout the mess hall.

Tony appears to be elated. "This is very good news," he says. He turns to the whole table and announces, "Who's up for celebrating?"

Of course, not all of the Army training consists of brushing up on how to say "Where is the bathroom?" in Uzbek and learning some local customs that might otherwise be gleaned from a copy of *Let's Go Kandahar*. The transition team training emphasizes applied knowledge.

An entire MiTT—a dozen or so men—carefully file into a cramped room in another one of the base's drab mobile homes masquerading as office space. Two Afghan instructors are seated comfortably on a couch against the back wall, facing an expanse of soldiers in fatigues. In between them is a footlocker that serves as a coffee table, on which are placed some stained doilies and a modest tea set. The team knows next to nothing about the situation going in.

In a "Leader Meeting" like this one, the instructors they are about to encounter could be warlords, Afghan Army officers, village officials, or gracious hosts simply serving them a meal and helping them practice their Dari. What they will not be doing is speaking English.

Pure discomfort hangs in the air from the moment the team walks in, and for good reason. The doilies on the footlocker are stained because leader meetings sometimes do not go well, physical threats are made, and tea gets upended by pounding on the makeshift table.

A middle-aged Afghan from Seattle is laying out the
up sign it's the same as the finger, don't say hello to

The three MiTT leaders arrange themselves on folding chairs up front. The two instructors, Mohammed and Omaid, are lanky and disarmingly handsome, but their combined physical presence is all coiled tension. The first thing they do is offer the soldiers tea. The Americans make basic introductions with their limited Dari and then through the team's translator Ibrahim, one of the team leaders—again a Southerner—clumsily makes a joke about not being able to find any iced tea in Afghanistan.

Mohammed and Omaid counter by wondering why the Americans don't like their tea, and thus begins the American backpedaling. It's hard to imagine any Hollywood casting director not being floored by Mohammed and Omaid's performance. The two play off each other like they have a psychic link, knowing perfectly how to act offended and when to hang back and let the Americans swim in a sea of their uncomfortable pauses and fierce stares.

The American team leaders proceed more cautiously, and Mohammed and Omaid reluctantly lay out one thread of information at a time. They want the Americans to help their troops go into a nearby village at dawn and burn the poppy fields of suspected Taliban.

You can see the American team leaders gaining confidence. They stay focused and patient and take notes on everything the Afghan commanders say as they sort out the logistics of the mission—how many Americans the Afghans want to participate, whether they need a Humvee, and dozens of other logistical details excruciatingly extracted through their translator. Ibrahim plays his role to the hilt here as well; like many local translators the soldiers may be forced to rely upon, he provides impish replies that don't exactly project trustworthiness.

The biggest hitch only slowly emerges: There's a chance the poppy fields aren't Taliban. The intelligence suggests that the owner simply has a beef with the village leader. It's a tough call, but the Americans reluctantly agree to back the Afghans on their mission. After the final decision is made, the meeting breaks with a wave of relief followed by much handshaking and backslapping. The celebration is a tad premature.

Staff Sergeant Darmi Haughton is tasked with evaluating the proceedings and has been industriously scribbling notes on her clipboard the entire time. Her hair is pulled back into a tight bun under her cap, she looks a bit incongruous wearing her battle dress in such an obviously

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basics of cultural sensitivity in his home country—don't show the soles of your feet, if you give the thumbs women on the street. "We can't tip our Kevlar and say 'Howdy, Ma'am'?," asks one soldier incredulously.

An ANP officer and a MiTT trainee plan a joint cordon and search mission with the help of a translator.

administrative setting. She's bookish for a soldier, and her owlish demeanor during the exercise resulted in a detailed evaluation. Overall the team did very well extracting information, she says, but the transition team leaders didn't ask whether the Afghans had cleared the mission with their higher command, nor did the team leaders explain to the Afghan Army leaders that they would have to clear the mission with their own command.

The other big criticism speaks to the proposed timing of the mission and the team's cultural understanding of Afghanistan. "It's 5:30 in the morning. Right after prayer time. So everybody's out there: women, children, whatever. So if something does go wrong, who's going to be there? The Americans are going to be there, and if the Americans do something wrong, it's televised—it's big," Haughton says.

The criticism is sobering. All members of the team, not just the leaders, begin discussing what they did wrong, and the conversation is quite productive. After everybody leaves the room, Omaid and Mohammed begin to relax, and turn from Afghan soldiers back into Afghan-Americans. They tell me they've been doing four or five leader meetings a day for eight months. No wonder they're so good.

Major Erich Campbell looks a little tired around the eyes. He's got a blond crew cut and a bearing that exudes the inevitable hardness that comes from intense training and recent combat. Only after talking to him a while does it become apparent that he's about as relaxed as he's been in quite a while. He only recently got back from a MiTT assignment in Iraq. He generates a lot of interest from the soldiers bound for Afghanistan and visitors alike, but he is guarded; the mission in Iraq wasn't necessarily a success. "I was with the 8th Brigade Iraqi National Police. We were actually the brigade that was disbanded and pulled off the streets and reformed," Campbell says. "They were pulled off the streets because they were doing what we'd call extra-judicial killings. We suspected it and we were finally able to prove it. Because of that, the brigade was pulled off and reformed, and some

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The success of MiTTs corresponds with the amount of time they have been integrated with local units. They start out at the battalion level and work their way down to companies.

of the senior leadership was relieved of command."

The incident made national news back in the United States. Campbell freely admits that the situation in Iraq is far more complicated than Afghanistan, and the transition team work is much tougher. "We were actually applied as a Band-Aid to our situation with the Iraqi National Police," he says. "The Iraqi National Police was kind of formed without any U.S. input. There's a lot of interservice rivalry between the Iraqi police, the Iraqi National Police, and the Iraqi army. They all have their own agendas."

Santiago Sendegas, a military contractor, is arrested and led out of the urban cluster by an Afghan policeman.

Along with the interservice corruption and rivalries, the resistance on the ground in Iraq runs deeper and stronger than in Afghanistan. Internecine strife among the Iraqi people is also a challenge. Campbell had spent seven months in Afghanistan, but when he got to Iraq he quickly realized that Afghan tribal disputes don't compare to the Sunni-Shia conflict.

And while Campbell says that things are improving, the American command does plenty to add to the mess. "We were undermanned too because of reporting requirements and admin requirements—just horrendous," he says. "Everybody wants to know what's going on, how they're doing, what's their status. I think, for just a 9-man element [plus 30 to 40 support staff], we produced over 600 reports a month." In Iraq, it seems even the paperwork is deadly.

But in spite of all this, there is real progress to point to. The success of MiTTs largely corresponds with the time the forces have been integrated. Iraqi National Police transition teams are just getting set up. The transition teams with the Iraqi army were implemented two years before those with the Iraqi police, and the Afghan transition team program began two years before that with the Iraqi army. As a result, teams in Afghanistan are integrated all the way down to the company level, whereas the more centralized Iraqi forces are only integrated at the larger battalion level.

"I'm pleased to say that while I was there the Iraqi army had really come around. So I might sound like I'm talking bad about the [INP], but really it's just a very new organization," Campbell says.

And in the end, Campbell observes, the fact that his transition team was able to identify and stop the Iraqi corruption is a sign of progress, not failure. "We were only the second generation there. The fact that we had the senior corrupt leadership removed was a tremendous step," he says. "Prior to us even arriving, [the INP] had never received any training, they were basically pulled in off the street and given AK-47s. So by the time we left they were being given standard weapons, standard uniforms, and standard training—and that takes a year. We measure our success in millimeters. It's more than just training—it's changing a whole mindset."

Innovative programs like the transition teams demonstrate the Army's commitment to fundamentally rethinking its mission. Few people are suggesting that the recent success in Iraq, five years after the war began, is because of these programs begun in Afghanistan and maturing in Iraq. But as such tactical innovations gain momentum, they could very well lead to much more success.

In the meantime, while politicians and pundits continue to be surprised by recent progress in the war, perhaps they should visit Fort Riley and speak to Major Campbell. "We will see a lot of improvement," he says. "The training here has really gotten phenomenal." ♦

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Myths About Israel and the Middle East (1)

Do the media feed us fiction, instead of fact?

We all know that, by dint of constant repetition, white can be made to appear black, good can get transformed into evil, and myth may take the place of reality. Israel, with roughly one-thousandth of the world's population and with a similar fraction of the territory of this planet, seems to engage a totally disproportionate attention of the print and broadcast media of the world. Unfortunately, much of what the media tell us — in reporting, editorializing in columns, and in analysis — are endlessly repeated myths.

What are the facts?

■ **Myth:** The "Palestinians" are a nation and therefore deserving of a homeland.

Reality: The concept of Palestinian nationhood is a new one and had not been heard of until after the Six-Day War (1967), when Israel, by its victory, came into the administration of the territories of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip. The so-called "Palestinians" are no more different from the Arabs living in the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, than Wisconsinites are from Iowans.

■ **Myth:** Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip are "occupied Arab territory."

Reality: All of "Palestine" — east and west of the Jordan River — was part of the League of Nations mandate. Under the Balfour Declaration, all of it was to be the "national home for the Jewish people." In violation of this mandate, Great Britain severed the entire area east of the Jordan River — about 75% of Palestine — and gave it to the Arabs, who created on it the kingdom of Transjordan. When Israel declared its independence in 1948, five Arab armies invaded the new country in order to destroy it at its very birth. They were defeated by the Israelis. The Transjordanians, however, remained in occupation of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and East Jerusalem. They proceeded to drive all Jews from those territories and to systematically destroy all Jewish houses of worship and other institutions. The Transjordanians (now renamed "Jordanians") were the occupiers for nineteen years. Israel regained these territories following its victory in the Six-Day War. Israel has returned the entire Gaza Strip to the Palestinians. The final status of the "West Bank" will be decided if and when the Palestinians will finally be able to sit down and seriously talk peace with Israel.

■ **Myth:** Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") are the "greatest obstacle to peace."

Reality: This is simply not correct, although it has been repeated so often that many have come to believe it. The greatest obstacle to peace is the intransigence and the irreconcilable hostility of the Arabs. Not more than 150,000 Jews are settled in these territories, living among about 1.4 million Arabs. How can Jews living there be an obstacle to peace? Why shouldn't they live there? About 1.2 million Arabs live in Israel proper. They are not an obstacle to peace. Neither the Israelis nor they themselves consider them as such.

> "Peace will only come when the Arabs finally accept the reality of Israel. And that is not a myth — that is a fact!"

■ **Myth:** Israel is unwilling to yield "land for peace."

Reality: The concept that to the loser, rather than to the victor, belong the spoils is a radically new one, never before thought of in world history. Israel has emerged victorious in the five wars imposed on it by the Arabs. In order to make peace, it has returned over 90% of the territory occupied by it, specifically the vast Sinai Peninsula, to Egypt. That territory contained some of the most advanced military installations in the world, prosperous cities and settlements, and oil fields developed entirely by Israel that made it independent of petroleum imports. In the Camp David Accords, Israel agreed to autonomy for Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") with the permanent status to be determined after three years. But no responsible Palestinian representation has been available to negotiate with Israel about this.

All these myths (and others we shall talk about) have poisoned the atmosphere for decades. The root cause of the never-ending conflict is the unwillingness of the Arabs (and not just the Palestinians) to accept the reality of Israel. What a pity that those of the Palestinians who are not Israeli citizens have lived and continue to live in poverty, misery and ignorance. They could have chosen to accept the proposed partition of the country in 1947, would now have had their state alongside Israel for almost sixty years and could have lived in peace and prosperity. They could have kept hundreds of thousands of refugees in their homes and could have saved tens of thousands of lives. Peace will only come when the Arabs finally accept the reality of Israel. And that is not a myth — that is a fact!

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Alan Shrugged

. . . And Washington fell to its knees

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

I was in the midst of reading up on Alan Greenspan, whose new memoir, *The Age of Turbulence*, has just been published to wide publicity and boffo sales, when I saw in a local gossip column that he and his wife had been spotted (somehow!) spending yet another Sunday afternoon in the owner's box at FedEx Field, watching the Washington Redskins.

For Washingtonians of a certain sort, the owner's box and its shifting set of inhabitants plays roughly the same social role that the roof of Lenin's Tomb did in the old Soviet Union—a promontory upon which members of the city's elite can display themselves. And I recalled an odd moment from a biography of Ayn Rand, the radical libertarian philosopher to whom Greenspan was devoted earlier in his career.

"Do you think Alan might basically be a social climber?" Rand once asked a mutual acquaintance.

It wasn't a rhetorical question, apparently. This was in the late 1950s. By then, Rand had published her two thick, preposterous novels, *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, and stood poised on the brink of international stardom. Her creepy philosophy of Objectivism, placing the self at the center of the moral universe, was being enthusiastically embraced, as it still is, by tens of thousands of pimply teenage boys in the dreamy moments between fits of social insecurity and furious bouts of masturbation. As her cultish fame spread, Rand wanted to keep tabs on her most intimate acolytes. Of these Greenspan was the most promising and, by all appearances, the most normal. Which worried her.

The Age of Turbulence
Adventures in a New World
by Alan Greenspan
Penguin, 544 pp., $35

He had, for example, a life; most of the members of the Collective—the name her dozen closest followers attached to themselves—did not, devoting themselves to her welfare exclusively. Greenspan was making good money, soon to be *great* money, as a savvy economics consultant. He lunched with bond traders, corporate leaders, even titans of industry, real-life versions of the planet-girding capitalists Rand fantasized about and invented for her books. On Saturday nights Greenspan, then in his early thirties, would gather with his fellow Collective members in Rand's dim, shuttered apartment in midtown Manhattan (she kept the windows closed and the blinds drawn for many years, after one of her beloved cats tumbled tragically to its death). There in the grim presence of their idol they would sit on folding chairs and release expletives of thrilled admiration as her writings were read aloud. One memoir from the Collective, *My Years with Ayn Rand* by Nathaniel Branden, shows that even then Greenspan's mode of communication was Greenspanian.

"Ayn," Alan would say, overcome by some Randian insight, "upon reading this, one tends to feel exhilarated!"

Greenspan could argue for the gold standard, the absolute deregulation of the economy, the abolition of the Federal Reserve, and every other item of Rand's libertarian dogma with unparalleled rigor. When *Atlas* was slammed by a left-wing reviewer for the *New York Times*, who detected in Rand's advocacy of an unbridled free market a poorly concealed totalitarian itch, Greenspan took to her defense with a (now famous) letter to the editor.

> To the editor:
>
> 'Atlas Shrugged' is a celebration of life and happiness. Justice is unrelenting. Creative individuals and undeviating purpose and rationality achieve joy and fulfillment. Parasites who persistently avoid either purpose or reason perish as they should. . . .
>
> Alan Greenspan
>
> New York

But of course Rand was right to feel uneasy about acolyte Alan. Greenspan slowly slipped from her orbit, and though he never explicitly repudiated her or Objectivism—he speaks of both fondly, though vaguely, in his new

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JAMES BENNETT

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book—he never once tried to advance her pitiless worldview from the many positions of power he has held since leaving her circle. Judged by his public performance, it's as if he'd never believed in Objectivism at all; he was, so to speak, objectively anti-Objectivist. The eloquent theoretician of unregulated capitalism instead became capitalism's highest-ranking regulator, chairman of the same Federal Reserve that Rand disdained as the parasites' protector and chief impediment to the New Man. Greenspan has earned vast praise and celebrity as a result.

How vast? For more than a decade he has been a totem, a mythic figure. In 1998 the *New Republic* published an article called "Praised Be Greenspan" that described a bond-trading firm that had turned its offices into a shrine to Greenspan, complete with a glass case containing "two Bic pens Greenspan supposedly used in 1993." Traders, reported the magazine, would come in to gaze at his photograph and meditate throughout the day. Much later, readers learned that this detail had been invented by one of the writers of the piece, the infamous fabulist and liar Stephen Glass, but at the time nobody in Washington seemed to think it outlandish: Indeed, it made perfect sense. And the piece was co-bylined by the magazine's chief economics writer, who apparently didn't notice anything amiss either.

And why would he, when even the most revered journalists revere Greenspan beyond the limits of plausibility? In 2000, the Fed chairman was the subject of an entire book by Bob Woodward, entitled nothing less than *Maestro*, which gives you an idea of the tone. Every page testifies to the approval of the Washington establishment that Woodward serves as chief chronicler and enforcer: "With Greenspan, we find comfort," Woodward wrote. "He helps breathe life into the vision of America as strong, the best, invincible. . . . Each of us is a character in the nation's great economic soap opera; Greenspan is both director and producer."

How Greenspan managed to rise from Ayn Rand's airless apartment on East 36th Street to the sun-drenched owner's box at FedEx Field is one of the many interesting questions that he fails to answer in his new memoir—and one that has yet to be addressed in the hurricane of publicity that the book touched off. Greenspan likes to joke that he would favor a constitutional amendment barring from the presidency anyone who was willing to do what you have to do to become president. It's a good joke, but it makes you wonder: What do you have to do to become Alan Greenspan?

Timing and luck had a lot to do with it. It's unlikely that before the 1990s the nation's political elite—especially its Baby Boomer journalists, few of whom are frankly left-wing but most of whom are mildly left of center, and all of whom once considered markets mysterious and unsavory—would have lionized a chairman of the Federal Reserve, much less enhaloed him with the star power of a better-dressed, shorter Harrison Ford. But Greenspan was perfectly positioned to benefit from the signal political event of the 1990s: the reconciliation of moderate liberalism to market economics and the unimaginable wealth markets can create. Bill Clinton, himself the standard bearer of the squishy left, had a hand in this reconciliation when he resigned his administration to the unadventurous economic policies of free trade and a modest federal budget. He was, in his own phrase, an "Eisenhower Republican."

The amazing technological leaps of the digital revolution helped even more, making everyone from farmers to fishmongers more productive, and setting off an explosion in wealth beyond even Reaganite dreams. Baby Boomer liberals, glimpsing retirement on the horizon, suddenly found themselves getting rich, thanks to privately invested pension plans and 401(k)s stuffed with mutual funds.

From "How do we equalize incomes and make American society fair?" the preoccupying question of Democrats and social progressives became, "Say, where'd all this money come from?" Some goose somewhere was laying some kind of gi-normous golden egg! They looked around for someone to credit—for surely it had to be a government official who was responsible—and settled on the owlish fellow in the Poindexter glasses, who spent his days doing God-knows-what in a sealed-up marble sarcophagus on Constitution Avenue. "In Greenspan We Trust," said the headline on newsmagazine covers.

Greenspan knows better, of course, and in his book he makes desultory attempts to wave off all the adulation. "The evidence doesn't support that conclusion," he has said about his reputation as miracle-maker, thereby maintaining, at least for the record, his reputation for realism, modesty, and "fact-based analysis." But in this case his heart clearly isn't in it. As his memoir shows, he has stoked the mystique himself. He is highly self-amused on the subject of "Fedspeak," the jargon-laden, zig-zagging syntax in which he entombed his public pronouncements. Fedspeak from the mouth of any other public official would be called evasion, euphemism, misdirection, or obscurantism. Greenspan calls it "constructive ambiguity," as though clarity of expression would have made his job nearly impossible.

And maybe it would have, but there's another possible explanation: a deep-seated mistrust of language—a disinclination to phrase ideas in concrete terms. Fedspeak is a particularly floppy form of prose. Take a wooly noun, attach it to a nebulous verb, thrust both at an undefined object, and whammo: You, too, could be Greenspan giving his Humphrey-Hawkins testimony before a congressional committee. In Fedspeak, nouns that stand for real things or definable ideas and verbs that describe discrete acts disappear in a cloud where *aspects*, *factors*, and *dynamics* will *shape*, *impact* (sometimes positively, sometimes negatively), *implement*, or *enable* a series of *outcomes*, *probabilities*, or *conditions*. Try it*: I would venture to say, Senator, that the various dynamics in question might negatively impact the relevant probabilities.* No one will know what you're saying. But if you're chairman of the Fed, no one will dare complain, either. They'll think you might get

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mad and blow up their 401(k) plans. Somehow.

No prose as slovenly as Fedspeak appears in Greenspan's book; several passages are even charming in their lucidity, thanks to the efforts of his collaborator, Peter Petre, a former writer for *Fortune*. But several anecdotes do demonstrate, probably inadvertently, the advantages Greenspan drew from his habitual fuzziness. Economics is an inexact business, of course, and tracing effects back to causes can be difficult, especially when it comes to official actions of the government. But Fedspeak allows the Fedspeaker to claim credit or avoid blame, with equal plausibility, when policies or pronouncements turn out well or badly. That's what's constructive about the ambiguity! Fedspeak is a strategy that preserves not only the independence of the Federal Reserve but also the reputation of its chairman.

To cite one small example: The most famous phrase in Fedspeak is "irrational exuberance," which Greenspan dropped into the final pages of a long speech at a Washington dinner-dance in 1996. At the time the Dow Industrial Average stood at roughly 6,400. It's unclear even by his own account what, precisely, Greenspan intended by using the phrase: At one point he says he was only raising the possibility that stock prices were unrealistically high—merely "putting the issue on the table." But it's also clear he thought prices should go lower, and he knew that markets would drop in response to the remark. Whatever: Before the last drunk had been dragged from the dance floor, Greenspan's statement was rocking world markets, and it continued to do so throughout the night and next day.

In congressional testimony the following week, however, he denied he was trying to talk stock values down. He couldn't do that even if he wanted to, he told the congressmen. He pointed out that his worry about irrational stock prices was put in the form of a question: "How do we know when irrational exuberance has unduly escalated asset values?" (No answer was given.) Perhaps most revealing of all, Greenspan's Fed, after its chairman's public fretting, refused to attempt any concrete action that might slow the "escalation" of prices. And sure enough, after this brief hiccup, stock prices resumed their rise for several more years, and Greenspan, as we've seen, received credit and the undying gratitude of investors. Yet when the bubble finally burst, Greenspan's worry about "irrational exuberance" sounded like a prophecy: It's not like he hadn't warned us.

It's unlikely that before the 1990s the nation's political elite—especially its Baby Boomer journalists, most of whom are mildly left of center, and all of whom once considered markets mysterious and unsavory—would have lionized a chairman of the Federal Reserve.

He is an expert in having it both ways, ducking in and out of controversies, kibitzing about matters on which he had no responsibility (taxes and spending, for example, which are controlled by elected officials) and then taking offense when elected officials dared to kibitz about the interest rates he and his colleagues controlled. The habit of evasion has continued with the release of this book. Greenspan gave an advance peek at its contents to Bob Woodward, who wrote a front-page curtain-raiser story in the *Washington Post*. The news in the book, Woodward wrote—undoubtedly with Greenspan's acquiescence—was Greenspan's criticism of the Bush administration and the Republican Congress.

"My biggest frustration," Greenspan writes of George W. Bush, "remained the president's unwillingness to wield his veto against out-of-control spending." As for Republican congressional leaders, they were "readily inclined to loosen the federal purse strings any time it might help add a few more seats to the Republican majority." Their insistence on cutting taxes showed the same heedlessness. The result, Greenspan says, was not only unconscionable federal deficits but also his own disillusionment with his party. As a lifelong Republican, he's ashamed.

It should go without saying that Greenspan is not the first Republican to criticize the overspending of the last several Republican Congresses. Lots of Republicans have done it—really, you could look it up. But even they acknowledge, as Greenspan does not, that more than irresponsible spending and tax cuts have contributed to the deficit. We've seen, among other things, two wars; a very, very big hurricane; and a massive deployment of resources against terrorism. Bush officials responded to the Woodward story by noting that Greenspan, as Fed chairman, had testified in favor of the tax cuts. And Bush himself pointed out that today's budget deficit, at 1.5 percent of GDP, is quite low relative to the 30-year average.

Confronted with this fact-based analysis, Greenspan switched the terms of debate. "The president's numbers are correct," he told Fox News. "The issue is really not the short term . . . but what the potential is for the budget deficit when the Baby Boomers retire." That's not true: The complaints that Woodward splashed on the front page of the *Post*, and which launched Greenspan's book into bestsellerdom, were precisely about the "short term." Yet Greenspan slides in and out, bobs and weaves, keeping his reputation for integrity intact.

In the Washington that Greenspan inhabits, some kinds of evasiveness are preferable to others; it helps if you're criticizing out-of-favor Republican greasebags and an unpopular Republican president. And you can see why

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he would want, at all costs, to preserve his standing. There's something endearing in the evident pleasure he takes from the high life he leads. He refers insouciantly to "the glitter of the White House," the welcome sanctuary of its tennis court, the convenience of the presidential box at the Kennedy Center. At certain points in his book he just flips open his social calendar and lets his ghostwriter jot down the names: "I did build up a wonderful circle of friends: . . . Henry and Nancy Kissinger, Oscar and Annette de la Renta, Felix and Liz Rohatyn, Brooke Astor (I knew her as a kid of seventy-five), Joe and Estée Lauder. . . . " Plus Barbara Walters.

More surprisingly, it turns out that much of what Greenspan has to say, when he sets evasiveness aside, is banal, on the subject of policy as well as people. Richard Nixon, he says, was paranoid and profane; Ronald Reagan liked to tell stories; Gerald Ford was normal. Half the book is devoted to discussions of globalization, the emergence of China, the disinflationary effects of new technology, and so on. But no one who reads the *Economist* or the *Wall Street Journal* will find anything fresh in his gloss (though you might be interested that he has more admiring things to say about Chinese dictator Zhu Rongji than about, for example, George W. Bush). No Washington hostess has ever struck a name from a guest list for excess banality. Sometimes it helps.

All this gives us hints of how to account for the mysterious rise of Alan Greenspan, but only hints, and hints are what we'll have to settle for. He is not a self-revealing man. Even without the Fedspeak, the opacity is preserved. Which has surely been his intention to the last. Perhaps for him the only essential thing about the story of Alan Greenspan is that the story has a happy ending. By his own lights, that long-ago letter to the *Times* has been proven right: "Justice is unrelenting. Creative individuals and undeviating purpose and rationality achieve joy and fulfillment."

As for the parasites—well, we know what happens to them. ♦

Below the Surface

What is not said speaks loud and clear.

BY EDWARD SHORT

No one now writing has put together a more consistently brilliant body of work than William Trevor. Wit, inventiveness, artful economy, and an old campaigner's familiarity with human failure distinguish alike his novels and his short stories.

Cheating at Canasta
Stories
by William Trevor
Viking, 232 pp., $24.95

If, in *Cheating at Canasta*, his 12th collection of stories, he falls short of earlier collections—and any collection should have to be very good indeed to top *The Day We Got Drunk on Cake* (1967), *Angels at the Ritz* (1975), *Lovers of Their Time* (1979), *After Rain* (1996), or *A Bit on the Side* (2004)—it is only because he has set himself a new and more exacting standard. Where once he might have been content to anatomize his Irish characters ("A Choice of Butchers," "Teresa's Wedding," "The Piano Tuner's Wives") or his English characters ("Broken Homes," "Matilda's England," "Torridge") with brisk definitiveness, as if to prove what whole lives' stories can reveal, in this latest collection he looks at those things about his characters that baffle the storyteller's art, and finds that it is the stories about them that cannot be told—or will not be told—that are most worth telling.

In "At Olivehill," about an Irish Catholic family that sells off the family land to a golf-course developer, Trevor shows how conspiracies of silence undermine families. After the sons of the family broach the sale, their mother Mollie swears them to silence: Their father James must not know that they intend to part with lands that have been in the family since penal times. Mollie herself finds her sons' insistence on the sale mystifying: "It was foolish. . . . Yet her sons weren't fools. It was graceless, even a vulgarity . . . yet they were not vulgar." Still, she refuses to protest. Then James dies and the consequences of her silence become plain. What her sons have done, and what she has helped them to do, will destroy Olivehill. Her silence has been accessory.

"Are we at one?" was a favorite phrase of Mollie's husband's and an emblem of the family's presumed accord. Now it comes back to upbraid her: "He loved to use that old expression. He loved to be reassured." All the more reason "he would hate what she had protected him from . . . [How] chilling and loathsome it would seem to him, how disappointing."

The living may refuse to speak to one another, but they cannot stop the dead from speaking. Mollie has a dream in which James tells her that to put a request into the county council for such a sale will expose the family to ridicule; but still she says nothing, preferring collusion to confrontation. When one of the servants comes and tells her that the family oaks have been felled, she withdraws for good into the "artificial dark" of her drawing room.

Silence is a character in its own right in this and all the stories gathered here. In "A Perfect Relationship," about a December/May affair between compatible misfits, "The reticence they shared was natural to them, but

Edward Short is completing a book about John Henry Newman and his contemporaries.

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they knew—each as certainly as the other—what was not put into words." In "An Afternoon," Trevor remarks of the adolescent girl who does not realize that the man with whom she is infatuated is a sex offender: "She didn't break the silence when they walked on, knowing that it was special, and better than all the words there might have been." In "Cheating at Canasta," the narrator speculates about a couple doing their all to keep up appearances in Harry's Bar: "It was their stylishness, their deportment, the young wife's beauty, her silence going on, that suggested Scott Fitzgerald, a surface held in spite of an unhappiness."

Trevor has never neglected the surface—much of his comedy springs from what Henry James once called "the anguish of exasperated taste"—but it is the unhappiness below that interests him most, the unspeakable grievances that thrive in silence.

V.S. Pritchett, Trevor's only peer in the art of the short story until he died in 1997, once wrote that "unselfing oneself, speaking for others, justifying those who cannot speak, giving importance to the fact that they live, is especially the privilege of the storyteller."

This describes what Trevor accomplishes in his fiction, though to say he *justifies* his characters would be saying too much. Like Joyce, Trevor is fascinated by the psychology of baseness. In "Men of Ireland," a story about an Irish exile who returns to his native land to shake down a priest who tried to reform him when he was a boy, he describes a rogue's progress which even the most forbearing storyteller would have difficulty justifying.

The heroine of "The Room" is another hard case. After finding out that her husband has been linked to the death of a young prostitute, Katherine begins a nine-year affair with another married man. Rather than leave her husband, she vouches for him, even though she knows his alibi is false. When police incompetence results in his acquittal, she continues to live with him, only sharing "the room" of her adulterous lover for certain set assignations. How?

> For all nine years there'd been restraint. There'd been no asking to be told, no asking for promises that the truth was what she heard. There'd been no asking about the girl, how she'd dressed, her voice, her face, and if she only sat there talking . . . There'd been no asking if there had really been the usual misery on the Northern line, the waiting for a taxi in the rain. For all nine years . . . there had been silence in their ordinary exchanges, in conversation, in making love, in weekend walks and summer trips abroad. For all nine years love had been there, and more than just a comforter, too intense for that . . .

Here again we encounter silence. The travesty of love that Katherine cobbles together out of her moral bewilderment is, indeed, ineffable.

"The Children" shows marriage in a less sordid light. When Connie, a young girl, loses her mother, her father Robert notices that her opposition to his remarriage is stronger than he had expected. It brings him and his fiancée up short to see such fierce, undiminishing love. It forces Teresa, the fiancée, to recognize not only her step-daughter's sensitivities but her own insensitivities: "Teresa confessed that nothing was as tidy as she'd imagined. There were no rights that cancelled other rights, less comfort than she'd thought for the rejected and the widowed, no fairness either." It also forces Robert to undergo a crash course in empathy: "Time would gather up the ends, and see to it that his daughter's honouring of a memory was love that mattered also, and even mattered more."

"Faith" provides another look at family relations. Bartholomew, a Church of Ireland clergyman, is marched about by Hester, his domineering sister, who puts asunder what she considers his "silly" engagement, secures for him the living of a well-endowed (if sparsely attended) church, where "they're managing with a recorded service," and takes charge of his new residence. About this singular hero, Trevor remarks, "Often he didn't want to talk about what had to be talked about, hoping that whatever it was would go away of its own accord." Bartholomew can hardly be blamed for not wanting his story told.

But then Hester falls mortally ill and he begins to face what he has spent a lifetime dodging. He acknowledges that Hester scared off his fiancée deliberately for her own selfish purposes; he admits that he is losing his faith. He admits how unfamiliar he finds the sister who has held such sway over his life: "He didn't know her; that thought came, which never had before. Her severity, the outspokenness that was natural to her, told too little."

Yet the imminence of death changes that. His own faith might be rattled, but he recognizes that "the intensity of her faith, the sureness of her trust, was unaffected by the pain she suffered." In his sister's acceptance of death, the brother comes to admire "the mercy of her tranquility," which he finds "a miracle that was real . . . Heaven enough, and more than angels." Here is a droll twist on the deathbed conversion.

The last story in the collection, "*Folie à Deux*," is about two estranged friends, bound by an act of youthful ignominy, who accidentally meet up again in Paris. Wilby tries to mitigate what Anthony recognizes is immitigable:

> For Anthony, the betrayal matters, the folly, the carelessness that would have been forgiven, the cruelty. It mattered in the silence—while they watched, while they clambered over the shingle and the rocks, while they passed through the gorse field. It matters now. The haunted sea is all the truth there is for Anthony, what he honours because it matters still.

Some regard guilt as chimerical; Trevor recognizes that without it there would be neither penance nor redemption. In "Old Flame," a story about the often-thankless demands of loyalty, Trevor remarks about his beleaguered hero: "No one told him that keeping faith could be as cruel as confessing faithlessness."

By endeavoring to tell stories that his characters wish untold, or tell falsely, or cannot tell, Trevor keeps faith with the art of storytelling. He also lays bare the treachery of the human heart. ♦

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James's Faith

The pragmatist who understood the value of religion.

BY DAVID KLINGHOFFER

The series of New Atheist tracts that have shot up the bestseller list seem like distress flares launched from the deck of a foundering ship at sea. Surely the enthusiastic reception bestowed on these books, led by Christopher Hitchens's *God Is Not Great* and Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion*, signals that something has gone wrong in an unprecedented way with our supposedly religious national culture.

William James
In the Maelstrom of American Modernism
by Robert D. Richardson
Houghton Mifflin, 622 pp., $30

Or has it? A comforting observation to be drawn from Robert Richardson's fine biography of the philosopher and psychologist William James is that America went through a similar crisis more than a century ago, pitting atheism against theism. That we emerged intact then may have been thanks partly to insights offered by James. Those insights remain fresh, both in their expression—he was a fantastic writer (as is Richardson)—and in their content, which has lost little of its relevance. The only fault in Richardson's *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism* is that the biographer doesn't draw out the contemporary relevance, the echoes of our times, in his compelling narration of the life of his subject.

William James (1842-1910) grew up, like his brother the novelist Henry James, in a household saturated with God-talk. Their father, Henry James Sr., was permitted by family money to spend his time writing a succession of cryptic, mystical theological texts. Yet as a young man, William James was less interested in religious enthusiasm than in Darwinian evolution. His mentor at Harvard was the anti-Darwinian zoologist Louis Agassiz, whose views James ultimately rejected.

James was a born teacher, going on to teach psychology and philosophy to Harvard students for 35 years. He also had a knack for counseling, possessing as he did a tremendous—if erratic—sympathy for others. James was devoted to his wife Alice, but Richardson describes him as a "philanderer," if not an overtly sexual one. He indulged in "a mad crush on every other woman he met," which he didn't bother to hide from an increasingly wounded Alice.

Despite bouts of hypochondriac worries and genuine ill health, he was massively productive. James's groundbreaking explanations of how the mind works—as in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890)—seem less provocative now than they once did. On the other hand, his less academic contributions to what we may call the field of self-help still captivate. Some of his views sound like a less flaky version of Rhonda Byrne's *The Secret*. This phenomenally popular, Oprah-endorsed film-and-book combo purports to explain how, by imagining what you want (wealth, health, anything), you can have it. James thought that there are, indeed, areas where believing in something can make it so. He gave as an example that, if you want to win a woman's heart, it improves your chances to think and act as if she already loves you.

He might have been recalling his own affection, at age 28, for a gravely ill young woman named Minnie Temple. It was her death in 1870 that initiated James's engagement with religion. A month after, he was overtaken by a terrifying vision. While fully awake, he suddenly saw in his mind an epileptic patient from an asylum he had visited, "a black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic," who "sat there like a sculptured Egyptian cat or Peruvian mummy, moving nothing but his black eyes and looking absolutely inhuman." Reeling at the thought that such a condition could befall himself, James took refuge in Biblical verses.

The defense of religion became a salient theme in his work. Why the continued attraction to it? Richardson smartly observes that much of William James's best intellectual energy was poured into defying academic and elite assumptions: "James moved toward a major idea by starting out in opposition or resistance to received ideas." One such idea was Darwinism. James the instinctive contrarian lived through Darwinian evolution's earliest acceptance, which he often noted with approval even as he perceived its challenge to religion. It led to a view—"widespread at the present," he said in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902)—that religion was only a relic surviving from the primitive past. In opposing this "survival theory," James saw that "the current of thought in academic circles runs against me." He relished that fact.

In his philosophic work *Pragmatism* (1907), James observed that Darwin had displaced "the argument from design," with the result that "theism has lost that foothold." While rejecting conventional theism for himself, he also chastised the overly refined religious believer who worships a deity that never impacts the physical world. Such a believer "surrenders . . . too easily to naturalism" so that "practical religion seems to me to evaporate." Why would a religious person concede so much ground? James pointed out that certain ideas are embraced by an uncritical public simply because of their "prestige."

David Klinghoffer is the author, most recently, of Shattered Tablets: Why We Ignore the Ten Commandments at Our Peril.

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He himself felt "like a man who must set his back against an open door quickly if he does not wish to see it closed and locked." Shrewdly, he noted that, in keeping a door open for faith, he had more credibility because he was not orthodox—indeed, he was irritated by orthodox Christianity—but rather an outside observer.

We can imagine his response to our New Atheists. In dealing with secularists in his own day, he appealed to experience, reason, and pragmatism. James argued that subjective experience has been undervalued as a source of enlightenment. In his essay "The Will to Believe," he explained that personal experience which would confirm religion's truth "might be forever withheld from us unless we met the [religious] hypothesis halfway." In other words, those who reject religion, for fear of being duped, have sealed themselves off from ever knowing whether they are wrong:

> I, therefore, for one, cannot see my way to accepting the agnostic rules for truth-seeking, or willfully agree to keep my willing nature out of the game. I cannot do so for this plain reason, that *a rule of thinking which would absolutely prevent me from acknowledging certain kinds of truth if those kinds of truths were really there, would be an irrational rule.*

William James

THE WEEKLY STANDARD / KATHERINE EASTLAND

Citing God's instruction to the Israelite leader Joshua, "Be strong and of a good courage" (Joshua 1:6), James argued that it is more reasonable to act from the hope that religion is true than it is to spurn faith out of the worry that it might be false. The religious act could even produce its own confirmation. Action creates reality. This is different from Pascal's wager. It's more like a vote for faith, which can generate the reality it endorses.

The idea wasn't original with him. It had already been crystallized by the book of Exodus (24:7), which records the declaration of the Jews in receiving the Ten Commandments: "Everything that the Lord has said, we will do and [then] we will understand." They would comply *now* with the commandments in the expectation that *later*, as a result of casting their vote for God, they would understand why He commands what He does. That illumination would confirm that God is a reality. To believe, and know that you're right to believe, you must first act.

That his religious psychology was anticipated in the Bible would not surprise William James. He appreciated Scripture as a "guide to life," the practical effects of whose guidance can be gauged. According to his philosophy of pragmatism, this is the preferred way to evaluate any truth claim. Pragmatism, he wrote, has "no materialistic bias as ordinary empiricism labors under" and judges theological ideas by the twofold criteria of whether they have "value for concrete life" and whether they mesh with "other truths that also have to be acknowledged."

Religion should make any individual believer better than he would be without it. It should not, rightly understood, violate science. It should provide a framework for diagnosing the ills of a culture, and for prescribing measures for the amelioration of social and political problems. If a biblical worldview does a better job of these than the secular alternative, that makes religion "true."

Yet James, that beguiling man, advocated a sense of humor about the fact that, despite our faith, notwithstanding our arguments for belief, we might have it all wrong. Then again, perhaps it's the New Atheists who have shut their ears to truth. Not that any of them would be likely to admit the possibility. ♦

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The Nose Knows

A brief for the sense that gets no respect.

BY EMILY YOFFE

In *The Scent of Desire*, psychologist Rachel Herz, a professor at Brown, wants to elevate our sense of smell—neglected, and even disdained as a part of our animalistic past—to the status of its more essential cousins, sight and sound. She points out that the sense of smell is the primary sense by which much of the animal kingdom negotiates the world. It tells who is family, what is edible, announces fertility, and indicates social hierarchy. Herz acknowledges that vision has become the primary survival sense for humans. But her personal theory is that humans' primordial sense of smell has evolved into our emotional system.

The Scent of Desire
Discovering Our Enigmatic Sense of Smell
by Rachel Herz
Morrow, 288 pp., $24.95

She writes, "I have often wondered whether we would have emotions if we did not have a sense of smell; *I smell therefore I feel*?"

My personal theory, based on developing hyper-smelling abilities during pregnancy, and living with a beagle for the past five years (a breed of dog Dave Barry describes as "a nose with feet") is that thank goodness our sense of smell is only a vestige of that of other mammals. Oddly, although Herz describes endless studies on humans and scents, she says nothing about the powerfully enhanced ability to detect odors experienced by many pregnant women. I remember kissing my husband when he came home from work and astounding him when I said, correctly, "You used that salad dressing again that I begged you not to eat—it has so much oregano and powdered garlic." The entire world seemed like an assault from a department store fragrance spritzer. I couldn't think; I could only try to avoid the next nauseating smell.

Herz writes that dogs can detect odors at concentrations 100 million times lower than we can: "This is the equivalent of being able to detect a drop of chocolate in a city the size of Philadelphia," she explains. Humans are actually wired for better smell ability than we have—about 65 percent of our genes for olfaction are no longer functioning. There was limited space inside our skulls and the genes giving us superior vision won out over scent.

I say this is all to the good. Herz observes that if all the genes coded for olfaction actually did work, "I am sure human culture, civilization, and our experience of reality would be very different from what it is now." No kidding. If we had a dog-like ability to smell, we'd all be abandoning our families to run to Philadelphia to find that drop of chocolate.

Speaking of which, unlike the sense of taste, which is hard-wired, our perception of what we smell is almost totally dependent on conditioning. Herz writes that newborns will smile if sugar is placed on their tongue, grimace at the taste of quinine, and purse their lips at a drop of vinegar. But "infants like the smell of feces and are equally indifferent to scents that adults view as negative or positive, respectively, such as rancid cheese and banana." It is culture, and personal experience, which teaches us what smells good or bad. She cites her own example of riding in the car as a child with her mother, when her mother detected the scent of skunk and said, "I love that smell!"—setting Herz up for a lifetime of skunk appreciation. (I remember first encountering the scent and thinking, What's the big deal? It's not so bad.)

Beagle, July 1949

TIME LIFE PICTURES

She says that China lost its 2004 Olympic bid in part because public pit toilets left a lavatory smell hanging over the city that was unremarkable to its citizens but repulsive to the Olympic committee. It is because perception of scent is both cultural and personal that the U.S. Army has not been able to develop a universal stink bomb, a safe way of dispersing crowds. One person's "yuck" is another person's "yum."

Herz attempts to build the case that scent has a particularly powerful ability to induce and call up emotions. Of course, she cites Proust's tea-laden madeleine—which was actually a taste memory. (Those two senses are synergistic: Without a sense of smell, food tastes bland and flavorless.) She says the other senses can trigger emotions as effectively as scent, but that a scent-provoked memory is particularly emotion-laden.

I didn't find her case entirely persuasive, especially since the other day I heard a snatch of John Coltrane's *Naima* on the radio and found myself welling up with tears, carried back to my childhood, watching my late father in the living room pretending to play along

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to his favorite saxophonist. Perhaps the right scent could have sent me back just as well, but I doubt it would have been more powerful.

The emotions of scent are not just tied up in memory, but in mating. Herz presents interesting research about how our own body odor, unique as a fingerprint, is a powerful tool in attracting or repelling a sexual partner. She cites evidence that, despite our bathed and deodorized society, we still release enough molecules for women to judge the suitability of a man by his aroma. Our body odor is a manifestation of our immune systems, and what women find most delicious are men with immune systems complementary to theirs—thus less likely to share the same deleterious genetic traits. Herz does concede that the visual tends to trump the olfactory for men.

In a discussion sure to enrage many, she says odor-induced illness, known as multiple chemical sensitivities syndrome, or MCS, in which the sufferer becomes weak, nauseated, and dizzy when exposed to the offending scent or scents, is probably nothing more than a conditioned psychological response to a belief the perfume or "sick building" is making one sick. She also says that getting aromatherapy may be lovely and relaxing, but the scents inhaled have no physiological benefit. The good feelings induced are the result of believing in the therapy.

While *The Scent of Desire* didn't convince me that humans are wrong to think of the sense of smell as a lesser sense than sight or hearing, it is, like any one-subject volume, filled with intriguing bits of information. We all have known couples who have struggled with infertility, adopted a baby, and then the wife has found herself pregnant. Herz gives a reason for this phenomenon: "Baby sweat/body odor can increase a woman's fertility . . . Baby scent begets babies." It's also the case that we must literally wake up to smell the coffee; our sense of smell is turned off during sleep.

Herz acknowledges scents are enigmatic, ephemeral, and hard to describe. But she tells you probably as much as you would want to know about them, unless you are a beagle. ♦

Diminishing Europe

The good life in Germany does not include children.

BY STEVEN OZMENT

A saying from the German Middle Ages suggests that a couple who cannot have children may be more burdened than a couple who do have children.

> *Die Kinder machen Weh und Leid Zerstören offt der Elter Frewd, Kein Kindt/Kein Sorg/klag nit so sehr ob schon dein Weib nicht Kindbar wer.* (Children bring grief and woe and often disturb parental peace: 'no child, no worry.' So do not complain so much just because your wife cannot bear a child.)

Historically, couples without children have, indeed, grieved. Although birth control has been practiced since antiquity, barren couples viewed themselves as truly cursed, like Hannah in the Bible (1 Sam. 1). Yet for almost a half-century a great many postwar European families have enthusiastically embraced either a "no-child" or a "no-more-than-one-child" family model.

In Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Germany, native birth rates barely leave a single offspring behind to replace its two parents. As a result, large and growing numbers of foreign workers—predominately Bosnian, Turkish, and African Muslims—have immigrated to Western Europe to work the vacant, or unwanted, jobs native Europeans now lack the manpower to fill. The economic and social costs of European reluctance to be "fruitful and multiply," as the Bible puts it, are high and going higher for Europeans. Denmark's immigrant population is only 5 percent Muslim, yet that 5 percent receives 40 percent of the state welfare budget, and those families are just beginning to grow.

The civic and political costs promise to become even more frightening as immigrant populations grow unchecked and assimilation to European languages and culture remains partial and increasingly tactical. Should there be successful Muslim proselytizing among German youth—many of whom do not share their elders' flight from the traditional family, religion, and work ethic—Germany could become, religiously if not yet politically, a mixed Muslim state within a quarter-century.

In Germany's large Muslim communities, speaking German and mastering the German Basic Law are proving to be effective tools not only for immigrant assimilation to German culture, but also for the ascendancy of immigrant culture over German. With the continuing growth of these communities, and the construction of mammoth mosques within them, will come increasing demands by the inhabitants to govern by *sharia* law rather than by German Basic Law.

One might have expected that Germans, who have been historically Europe's most theologically literate people, would have rediscovered and reembraced the lessons and resources of their own Catholic and Protestant heritage in coming to terms with European Islam. The misdeeds and shortcomings of those Christian churches in the 20th century do not merit their present oblivion. This is especially true in light of Christianity's vital historical contributions to European law, culture, and polity, without which Germans might still today be wandering across

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Germania in search of an Arminius.

Despite some countervailing evangelical straws in the wind, Germans today have hardened their agnosticism and atheism against established religion, apparently believing, counterintuitively, that the sermons of Luther and Bonhöffer are a less mighty fortress against Germany's gnawing problems (low native birth rates and bleak existentialism) than the old tin drums of Günter Grass and Jürgen Habermas. It is a good German question to ask today: Which of the two are more likely to assist new mothers with childcare and child-rearing and keep Germans' sunny-side up?

A year and a half ago, in a gripping interview with *Die Zeit*, Matthias Platzeck, Franz Müntefering's successor as Social Democratic party chairman, complained about the large numbers of Germans who no longer believe in the traditional German family, religion, and work ethic. One need only count late-20th-century Germany's historically low birth rates, scant church attendance, and mini-work-weeks with early retirement and cushy pensions, to see the gravity of Platzeck's complaint.

Meanwhile, unlike their hosts, Europe's growing Muslim immigrant communities are more devoted than ever to their traditional family, religion, and work ethic—thanks, in part, to the war in Iraq and to European political correctness. Given this state of affairs, and presently lacking a good alternative, it is not too far-fetched to ask whether new young, antimaterialistic generations of Germans might find a beacon in the new Muslim communities.

Like Chancellor Angela Merkel, Platzeck is an East German and a trained natural scientist. Raised in the Evangelical faith (his father was a pastor), he left it early, only to return to it a few years before the interview in *Die Zeit*.

In step with the great majority of West European intellectuals, Platzeck, disappointingly, insisted that his return to the faith of his father was more for "earthly reasons" than out of any deep spiritual insight or naive religious belief.

He could not say whether faith, or the lack of it, had anything to do with Europe's low birth rates and regressive family formation, although he wished to know whether, or how, the three might be linked. Clearly, unemployment and poor job prospects for highly educated Germans, especially talented German women who understandably do not wish to sacrifice their jobs to become mothers, are contributing to falling German birth rates. Those conditions have also created a modest brain drain of well-trained Germans to countries with desirable jobs at fair skill and salary levels, an ominous parallel to the steady flow of low to moderately skilled immigrant labor into the German workforce.

At the end of his interview, a refreshingly candid Platzeck blamed low German birth rates on a contemporary desire to live "a fun-filled life in the moment" (*Spass am Tag*). For both good reasons and bad, the typical German wants an untrammeled life, which child-rearing in every age and culture makes impossible.

In his best interview moment, Platzeck, echoing a more famous German, admonished his fellow countrymen and Europeans to let the tempting, ephemeral, self-indulgent moments go, and reach out for something larger and more lasting, what he called prolonged "joy in life" (*Freude am Leben*). Training a new generation in the way it should go, he allowed, is the supreme challenge of a people and a nation.

> Living for the moment does not help a society develop itself. It is children who give meaning to life. A society without children is a society without a future.

Let us hope that many Germans silently share Platzeck's challenging vision for his country, and will join him in the recovery of German purpose and nationhood. ♦

One for the Good Guys

An action thriller that approaches reality.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Unfortunate moviegoers who have suffered through Hollywood's recent efforts to make geopolitical sense of the Middle East may spend some of the running time watching this new suspense thriller, *The Kingdom*, with a sense of looming dread. Surely, any moment, there will be a scene in which it is revealed that the bombing of an American housing compound in Saudi Arabia—the central event in *The Kingdom*—was not the work of Islamofascist terrorists but rather of an evil oil company. Or the U.S. government. Or militant Christians brilliantly disguised in burnooses who are killing Americans to try and start a holy war with Muslims that will hasten the End of Times.

The Kingdom
Directed by Peter Berg

Surely the oleaginous attorney general who tries unsuccessfully to block an FBI team's trip to Riyadh to investigate the bombing will be shown furtively contacting his friends at Halliburton, giving them the location and coordinates of his employees so that they can be killed. Surely the extremely decent FBI director, who insists against the attorney general's wishes on trying

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to get to the bottom of the bombing, will be waylaid in a Washington parking garage by natty thugs in Zegna suits who will dispatch him with an assassin's bullet accompanied by the mild "phhhf"of a silencer.

Surely the conspiracy will go as high as the president, or perhaps even higher—to the vice president!

Such is the nature of present-day geopolitical thrillers. The bad guys appear to be sworn enemies of the United States, but in the fullness of time we discover the truth behind the Big Lie: The United States is the sworn enemy of everyone else, the master puppeteer pulling the strings while all others stand around helpless and powerless before the might of the Omnipotent Ugly American.

The great surprise of *The Kingdom* is that it does not take this approach at all—which is why, among other things, it is going to be embraced by Americans who will be thrilled by its unapologetic depiction of a heroic crew of stateside good guys going into Saudi Arabia in pursuit of those who slaughter innocent Americans in Allah's name. It evokes not *Syriana* or *Three Kings* or *The Bourne Ultidentipremacy*, but rather gritty police procedurals of the 1970s like *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three* (about a subway hijacking in Manhattan), *Dog Day Afternoon* (about a hostage-taking in Queens), or *The New Centurions* (about the private lives of Los Angeles cops).

The Kingdom was clearly inspired by the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing and the unprecedented degree of cooperation shown by the Saudi government in its immediate aftermath, when FBI forensic teams were permitted to scour the grounds in search of evidence. The team we see in *The Kingdom* has a personal motivation: One of their own, a universally beloved FBI agent, is among those killed. In the movie's first third, team leader Jamie Foxx pulls off a skillful bank shot to get his squad into Riyadh. The middle deals with the frustrations of trying to do police work in a police state. And in the heart-pounding final half-hour, the team finds itself under extreme duress in a Riyadh slum.

This is the fourth feature film made by director Peter Berg, and it moves him into Hollywood's first rank. *The Kingdom* is remarkably crisp and satisfying, and even more important for a suspense thriller, perfectly paced. Berg is a very good actor himself who knows how to get the best out of his cast. Jamie Foxx turns out to be a terrific action movie star, and it's exciting to see the wonderful Chris Cooper emerge from the slough of purse-lipped despond into which he has sunk in his recent movies and chew some of the very interesting scenery (Abu Dhabi doubles for Saudi Arabia).

From left: Jennifer Garner, Ali Suliman, Jamie Foxx, Chris Cooper

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

But by far the most memorable piece of acting in this film is a two-minute turn by a most surprising performer: country music superstar Tim McGraw. He plays a furious, grieving survivor of the attack, and (as Pauline Kael once said of Martin Scorsese's cameo in *Taxi Driver*) he brings such controlled intensity to the part that he burns a hole through the screen. McGraw made his acting debut in Berg's *Friday Night Lights* with a frightening and vivid portrait of an abusive alcoholic. I hope he and Berg are looking for a vehicle in which McGraw can take center stage; he might be the first singing star since Bette Midler to outshine his own recording career with his acting work.

What Berg and screenwriter Matthew Michael Carnahan do extremely well with their fictional depiction of the methods and modalities of terror strikes, and their portrait of the FBI's forensic work, adds another layer of documentary realism. This all serves to disguise the fact that *The Kingdom* is really nothing more than a satisfying fantasy oddly reminiscent of the most controversial foreign-policy fantasy of all time. In *Rambo: First Blood, Part Two*, a crazed and imprisoned Vietnam vet is given the chance to lead a crew into 'Nam to rescue POWs left there after the American pullout.

"Do we get to win this time?" Rambo asks his onetime commanding officer—a line that inspired chattering-class conniptions for months back in 1985.

There's nothing quite that pointed here, but just as *Rambo* offered its audience a small-scale do-over of the Vietnam war, so does *The Kingdom* offer a do-over of the aftermath of the Khobar Towers bombing and, to some extent, the war on terror. I can't explain precisely why without fatally compromising the movie's cleverly rendered plot, and especially its sensational final half-hour. Suffice it to say that *The Kingdom* provides not only a viscerally satisfying denouement but also a portrait of cross-cultural cooperation between Saudi cops and American cops that is as wonderfully pleasing as it is utterly fictional.

But as geopolitical fantasies go, *The Kingdom* is far closer to the mark than the self-serious anti-American conspiracy pictures about the Middle East it leaves in the dust. ♦

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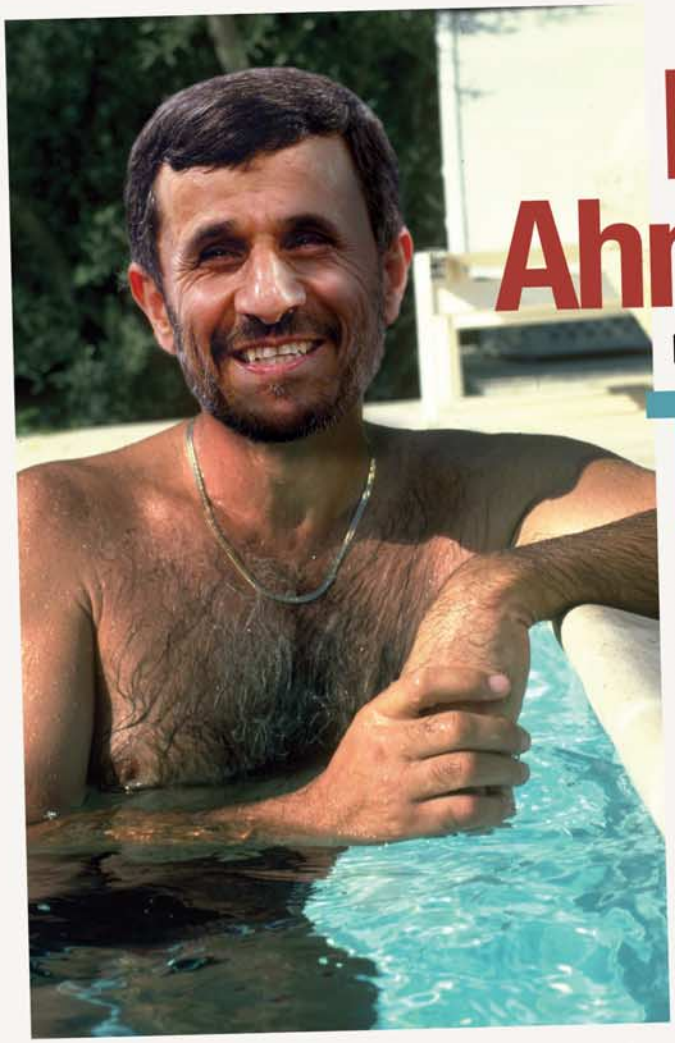
"During a question and answer session [at Columbia University], Ahmadinejad appeared tense and unsmiling, in contrast to more relaxed interviews and appearances earlier in the day."
—Associated Press, *September 24, 2007*



InStepWith®

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

By James Brady

THANKS TO A traffic snarl near the United Nations, I was running late for my interview with Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. We were to meet at Michael's, and when I showed up a little after noon, the place was bustling. Yet I found His Excellency sitting quietly at a corner table alone, dressed rather casually in khakis and a short-sleeved shirt, and sipping an herbal tea. I apologized profusely to the president but he would have none of it. "Normally you would have been stoned for tardiness," he said, "but I enjoy your column, especially your recent profile of Rosie O'Donnell. Although she would not be welcome in Iran, a country with no homosexuals, I do welcome her comments about Bush. Times have been so difficult for her."

The Iranian president himself has had a difficult and busy summer, sponsoring terrorists throughout the Middle East, shuttling weapons to Iraqi insurgents and Hezbollah, and, of course, transforming his country into a nuclear superpower. "A regional superpower," he pointed out, and one with a capability to reprocess and enrich uranium. Or something like that. "We only want what is justly ours. And please, call me Mahmoud."

Denied access to Ground Zero, Iran's president wanted instead to hit Broadway and see a show. "Something to cheer me up," said Mahmoud. "But now they tell me 'Jersey Boys' is sold out. What did I do to deserve this?"

With so much on his plate, how does Mahmoud make time for his family? "This is very tricky but I find ways," including bringing his wife and children along to various nuclear facilities, weapons factories, and public executions. "Learning to cope with such a rigorous schedule is one of the great challenges of this job. I can see why so many marriages end in divorce. Or death."

Brady's Bits

Mahmoud came from humble origins and didn't have as much money as other Iranians. "I grew up in a poor family and resented those who had more wealth than I. For years, I used to look enviously at them and I harbored such anger and outrage." And now? "I've learned to open my heart and accept others. Plus, those I hated I have put to death. Too bad for them and their families!"

So what is next for Iran's most dynamic (some say controversial) president? Perhaps some vacation time along the Caspian coast? "That would be nice and maybe I will get a little time for windsurfing and jet-skiing. But there is so much to do, Jim. We need nukes and we need to destroy the Zionist entity and wipe away its filth by pushing the infidels into the sea."

Our check comes and he insists on treating, showing that he not only opens his heart but his wallet too. Said Mahmoud: "That is how we roll."

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